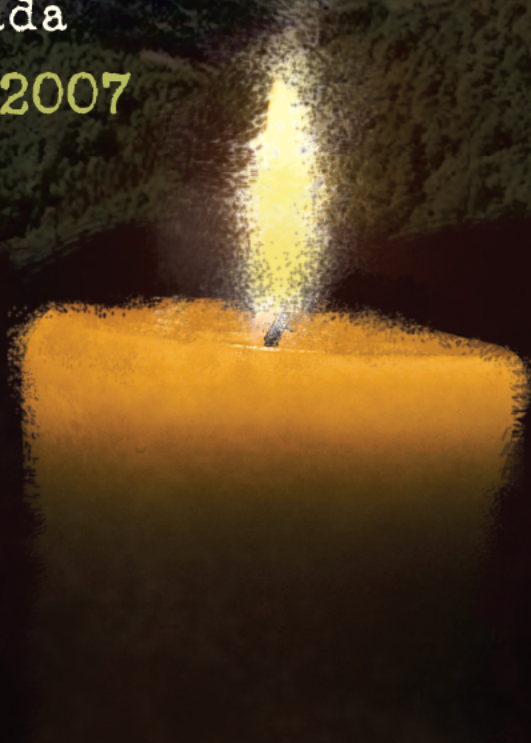


A Candle in the Night

Basque Studies at the
University of Nevada

1967-2007



A CANDLE IN THE NIGHT: BASQUE STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, 1967-2007

Interviewees: William Douglass, Gorka Aulestia, Jill Berner, Linda White, Marcelino Ugalde,
Joxe Mallea-Loaetxe, Joseba Zulaika, Carmelo Urza, Sandra Ott, and Kate Camino

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Interviewers: Kara Geiger and Mary Larson

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Description

1967 a small Basque studies program was established within the Social Sciences Division of the University of Nevada's Desert Research Institute. As originally conceived, the program's purpose was to study the Basques (who were historically the foremost sheep tenders in the American West) as a key human element in the Great Basin ecosystem. At the time, no one imagined that such a modest, narrowly focused little undertaking could grow to become today's Center for Basque Studies, considered by many to be the leading research and educational institute of its kind outside the European Basque homeland.

A Candle in the Night chronicles the history of the center, as remembered by many of those who were most important in its foundation and development. Within the context of this story, it also offers much valuable information about the center's offspring. These include the vast Basque Studies Library (the main repository of information about all things Basque for the English-speaking world), the Basque Book Series of the University of Nevada Press (one of the most successful ethnic series published by an academic press in the United States), and the University Studies Abroad Consortium (one of the largest programs of its kind in the world, with a presence in twenty-five countries).

While the Center for Basque Studies has achieved great things and has much of which to be proud, the road to success was not uniformly smooth. A Candle in the Night gives the reader the kind of multi-faceted understanding of issues and personalities that is often missing from official institutional histories.

A Candle in the Night

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Basque Studies at the
University of Nevada
1967-2007

From oral history interviews conducted
by Pedro J. Oiarzabal

Edited by Pedro J. Oiarzabal
Assistant Editors: Kathleen Coles, Allison Tracy

University of Nevada
Oral History Program
2007

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During the darkest day of the Franco era when we were denied our language, our culture, and our identity, we were consoled by the knowledge that an American university in Nevada had lit one small candle in the night.

Basque President José Antonio Ardanza

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FOREWORD

Nevada is a place that surprises newcomers. Very few people—especially those not from the West—are prepared for the size of the place. The diversity of the landscape is another surprise.

Nevada is also Basque Country. The story of the Basques is an immigrant story and as such is a quintessential American story. The Basque shepherds who settled in Nevada and the surrounding region helped shape Nevada's identity, and the state's history is filled with the history of Basques: families like the Laxalts, the Echeverrias, and the Ascuagas, just to name a few. The University's Center for Basque Studies stands out as one of the few such centers in the world.

In the pages that follow, you will see multiple histories unfold through the memories of many of the people who founded and nurtured the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. The University's Oral History Program has captured the stories, and history unfolds from the mouths of people intimately involved in creating and sustaining the Center. This volume will be of interest to anyone who studies the Basques, of course, but more than that it is the story of how organizations form around an area of interest, how academic departments are formed at universities, and about the nature of research and creative endeavors in general. And it tells it all with the backdrop of the wide-open Northern Nevada landscape and Nevada's

pioneering spirit. Anyone interested in the people, politics and history of the region will find this collection interesting and surprisingly familiar, like reading old letters with stories of friends and family members.

Oral histories are rarely the tidy summaries of facts and statistics that we are most accustomed to reading. More often, they are rich, complex stories of the type that rarely emerge except in more intimate settings: through dinner parties and lunches, and slowly from friendships built over time. *A Candle in the Night* captures the story of Basque Studies at our university in memorable texture and detail, with the personalities of the storytellers intact for the reader to enjoy and benefit from.

Milton D. Glick, President
University of Nevada, Reno

PREFACE

The University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) records and preserves primary-source interviews that illuminate significant topics in Nevada's remembered past. The program's chroniclers are people who participated in or directly witnessed the events and phenomena that are the subjects of its interviews. Following precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948, and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours, these recorded interviews and their transcripts are called "oral histories."

In the period since its founding in 1964, the UNOHP has built an ever-growing research collection of transcripts that now totals about 90,000 pages. This collection is heavily used by students, faculty, and publishing scholars. In CD format, it has been acquired by about 600 libraries, and all volumes are available in hard copy through the university libraries in Reno and Las Vegas.

Going beyond its scholarly mission, the UNOHP does something extraordinary for a program of its type: it reaches a large non-academic audience by publishing books and producing video documentaries based on selected parts of its work. *A Candle in The Night* is the latest such publication. Primarily the work of Dr. Pedro J. Oiarzabal, who began it while a student in my Oral History Theory and Methods course (HIST 786), it represents the first systematic attempt to record the history of the Center for Basque Studies (originally the Basque Studies Program) at the

University of Nevada, as remembered by principal figures in the story.

Between 2005 and 2007, Dr. Oiarzabal interviewed ten chroniclers for a total of about thirty hours. The recordings of these interviews yielded over 1,000 pages of verbatim transcripts. As is generally the case in oral history exercises, the transcripts are rich in information, but a great deal of work was necessary to shape them into something with the coherence and clarity desirable in a publication. With some assistance from the UNOHP staff, Dr. Oiarzabal did a splendid job, extensively editing the interviews so as to make them highly readable without compromising their integrity. In the process, he gave them narrative form by deleting or subsuming his questions into each story. The chroniclers then reviewed the work and affirmed in writing that it accurately represents the meaning of their words. Readers who desire access to the unpolished oral histories are invited to visit the offices of the UNOHP, where the tapes of the interviews may be heard by appointment.

In order to more efficiently organize the different subjects discussed by the chroniclers, Oiarzabal added thematic sub-headings to the text, which he arranged into three parts. The first part comprises Dr. William Douglass's recollection of the history of Basque Studies, from his perspective as its first coordinator and the only surviving founder of the program. In Part Two, other chroniclers, through reflections on their personal experiences and observations, build a richly textured account of the evolution of Basque Studies, 1967-2007. Part Three specifically addresses the creation and growth of the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC), which is an offspring of the Basque Studies Program.

As with all of the UNOHP's oral histories, while we vouch for the authenticity of the stories that make up *A Candle in the Night*, we advise the reader to keep in mind that they are personal accounts of a remembered past, and we do not claim that they are entirely free of error. Intelligent readers will approach the book with the same anticipation of discovery, tempered with caution, that they would bring to government reports, diaries, newspaper stories, and other interpretations of historical information.

R. T King, Director
UNOHP

INTRODUCTION

OROITZAPEN DEN GERORA: BEYOND MEMORY

In 1957 Robert Laxalt, a first generation Basque-American, authored *Sweet Promised Land*, which became a highly acclaimed literary work in the American West, as it portrayed, through Basque lenses, a paradigmatic tale of the life of an immigrant in the United States. Within the context of claiming Basque heritage throughout America, in June of 1959, the first-ever Basque regional festival in the United States took place in Sparks, Nevada, attracting thousands of Basques from all over the American West. At the time, it was the single largest public demonstration of Basque identity and culture that Nevada had witnessed.

Seven years later, a Basque club, named Zazpiak Bat (“Seven are One”—seven provinces as one province) was established in Reno, in an effort to unite all Basques from the seven different administrative Basque regions within Spain and France, and to promote and maintain Basque traditions. The institutionalization of the Basque presence in Reno opened a new chapter in the long, and sometimes not so visible, relationship between the Basques and other Nevadans.

Meanwhile, the Desert Research Institute (DRI), established by the Nevada legislature in 1959 as a research division of the University of Nevada, began, in the early 1960s, to discuss the possibility of establishing a Basque studies program that would focus on the Basques of the Great Basin. At roughly the same

time, Robert Laxalt was founding the University of Nevada Press, which would soon have a Basque Book Series. He had been instrumental in raising awareness about Basque culture through his involvement in organizing the Sparks festival, and he was an influential early advocate for the Basque Studies Program (BSP), which would become today's Center for Basque Studies.

William A. Douglass, a social anthropologist from Reno, was hired by DRI in June of 1967 to be the first coordinator of the Basque Studies Program, a function that he carried out for thirty-two years with the help and support of individuals and institutions ranging from the local to the international. In 1968, Basque bibliographer Jon Bilbao joined the program. Among them, Laxalt, Douglass, and Bilbao built the program's foundation.

Under General Francisco Franco's dictatorial regime (1939-1975), Basque culture was brutally repressed, and the language was forbidden. During that time, Basque emigrant diaspora communities, scattered throughout the Americas, not only financially supported the Basque government-in-exile and its different political and cultural initiatives, but they took on the task of maintaining the culture, the language, and artistic and folkloric expressions that were banned in the Basque provinces of Spain. As a result of the outcome of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) the majority of the Spanish and Basque intelligentsia flew into exile and found shelter in America. Basque publishing houses, such as Ekin, and studies programs, such as the American Institute of Basque Studies, established in Buenos Aires in the 1940s and 1950s respectively, mushroomed during this period.

The Basque Studies Program in Reno was not only highly influenced by prominent Basque-Americans, such as Laxalt, and by academics, such as Douglass and Joseba Zulaika (the program's second director), but also by Basque political exiles, such as Bilbao and Basque scholar Eloy Placer. Bilbao and Placer understood that political commitment to the Basque cause and advocacy for the culture and language were inseparable. In varying degrees, this view was shared by others, including Yon Oñatibia, instructor in the Basque Studies Program Summer Sessions Abroad, and first Basque Studies PhD graduates, Gorka Aulestia and Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe.

Both Bilbao and Placer were former Basque Army officers who fought against Franco's rebel army in the early stages of the

war. In 1945, Bilbao was made a Knight of the Order of the Belgian Crown for his services during World War II in favor of the liberation of Belgium. When Placer was buried in 1974 in Lafayette, Louisiana, it was with military honors, and his coffin was draped with the *Ikurriña* or Basque flag. This gives us an idea of the human quality and stature of some of the early contributors to the program.

The year 2007 marks the fortieth anniversary of Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), a true accomplishment for everyone who has been directly or indirectly involved with the program. It also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first edition of *Sweet Promised Land* and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC), another remarkable institution within UNR, whose origins can be traced to the first summer studies abroad programs that were organized by Basque Studies during the 1970s. USAC, a consortium of thirty-three U.S. universities, is currently one of the largest programs of its kind in the country, with a presence in twenty-five countries. Carmelo Urza has directed USAC since its creation, and Sandra Ott was the first field director in Europe. Without much doubt one can say that 2007 is the year of the Basques at UNR.

The life of Basque Studies is linked to over a third of UNR's history. For the last forty years, Basque Studies has grown alongside UNR, reflecting changes that have taken place on campus and in Nevada society overall. In the words of Jill Berner and Linda White, it has transformed itself from "a tiny, little operation in a closet" to a "supernova." White worked at Basque Studies for twenty-five years and was for a decade its assistant coordinator, while Berner managed the daily operations of the program for much of the last three decades. Kate Camino has been the office manager for the last nine years.

The Center for Basque Studies has become the leading national and international research and educational institute of Basque culture outside the Basque Country. Its library, holding over 45,000 titles, is the main informational reference for the English-speaking world, thanks to the efforts of librarians, such as Marcelino Ugalde. It is also one of the central educational and cultural referents within the globe-spanning Basque diaspora. Basque Studies has published a biannual newsletter since 1968 and over thirty books in the last few years, while the University

of Nevada Press Basque Book Series has published a total of fifty-five books since 1969.

As William Douglass stated on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Basque Studies, "The BSP is nothing more than the sum total of the efforts of many persons too numerous to name individually... many scholars, students and laymen in both the Old and New Worlds [and] thousands of people who have provided their moral and financial support."¹ In this regard *A Candle in the Night: Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, 1967-2007* chronicles the history of those faculty, staff, student workers, visiting students and scholars, and volunteers who have contributed to the development of the longest-lived academic program dedicated to the study of the Basques in the history of the United States. Combined, their stories are a narrative not only of the history of Basque Studies, but also of its offspring: the Basque Studies Library, the Basque Book Series, and the University Studies Abroad Consortium.

Pedro J. Oiarzabal
August 2, 2007

Notes

¹ William A. Douglass. "The Basque Studies Program (1982-1987)." *Basque Studies Program Newsletter*, Issue 36, 1987.

PART ONE

WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS

William “Bill” Anthony Douglass was born in 1939 in Reno, Nevada. His family, which was of Irish ancestry, had achieved prominence in the mining and gaming industries in the state. His grandfather, William James Douglass, founded the mining camp of Douglass in Esmeralda County in central Nevada in the 1890s. Bill’s father, Jack Douglass, was born in the booming mining town of Tonopah, and he became a pioneer in the gaming industry in the Silver State. Jack rose to leading positions in several Reno-based casinos, including the Club Cal-Neva, the Gold Dust, and the Comstock Hotel and Casino.¹ Bill Douglass would also participate in the family’s gaming business, becoming particularly active in the Riverboat Hotel and Casino in the late 1980s.

After graduating from Bishop Manogue Catholic High School, Bill was admitted to the University of Nevada, from which he received a BA in Spanish literature in 1961. He first visited Spain in 1959, studying at the University of Madrid for a year. He obtained an MA degree in anthropology at the University of Chicago in 1966, earning a PhD in social anthropology from the same university a year later. A week after his graduation he moved back to Reno to begin building a Basque studies program at the Desert Research Institute.



Bill Douglass, 2007

Bill Douglass co-founded the Basque Studies Program with Robert Laxalt and Jon Bilbao, and he remained its coordinator until his retirement in December 1999. Currently, he is a Basque Scholar Professor Emeritus at the University of Nevada, Reno. Here are Douglass's memories of the development of the Basque Studies Program under his administration.

Origins of the Basque Studies Program

The chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, Fred Eggan, visited Reno in 1961 as consultant to the Desert Research Institute (DRI). Wendell Mordy, President of DRI at that time, had brought in three anthropologists: Eggan from Chicago, Omer Stewart from the University of Colorado, and Robert Heizer from Berkeley. They were asked to come up with some ideas about what the new Desert Research Institute's Center for Western North American Studies might do in the area of the social sciences. (DRI was

focused primarily on Great Basin hydrology and atmospheric physics.)

The consultants, of course, came up with the obvious things like archaeology and studies of Great Basin Indians, such as the Washoe, Paiute, et cetera. But Omer Stewart, it's my understanding, said, "You've got all of these sheepherders in the Great Basin; plus, the Basques in Europe are kind of a mystery people. So why don't you have a little Basque studies program within your center?" DRI was intrigued by that, and I think by 1961 DRI had accepted, in principle, the idea of a Basque studies program.

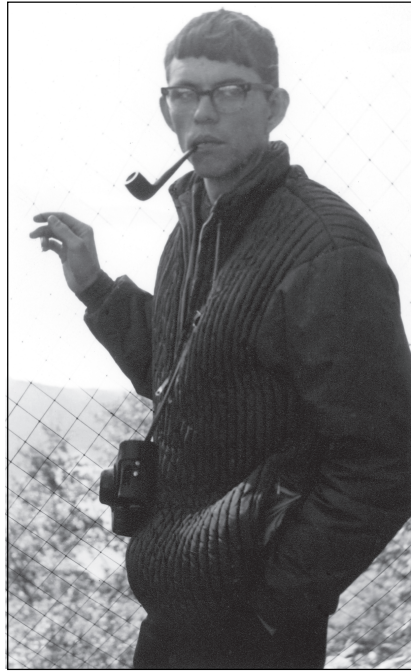
I was a first-year graduate student at the University of Chicago at the time. When Eggan got back from Reno, he told me about the meeting and said that he hoped I didn't mind that he had thrown my name into the hopper. I said, "OK."

Eggan said, "We expect you back next fall, and you can have a fellowship." I didn't have a fellowship up to then.

I said, "But I've already made arrangements to go to the Basque Country to start my fieldwork." (Julian Pitt-Rivers, a Europeanist at the University of Chicago, had given me contacts with Julio Caro Baroja and people like that.)

Eggan said, "We'll release your fellowship to you in the field. Start your field research."

Basically, that's what happened. I took my wife and son and went to the Basque Country in the fall of 1963. Before we left, I was back in Reno that summer, working construction. I had a cousin in Carson City, Blanche Robb, who knew Bob Laxalt very well.² My cousin said, "Would you like to meet 'Frenchie'



Bill Douglass conducting fieldwork in the Basque Country, 1960s.

before you go? I think he's going to the Basque Country, too." (Frenchie is what they called Bob Laxalt in Carson. Bob was planning his second major trip to the Basque Country, which was going to be a year-long sabbatical leave. He was taking his three children, and he was going to put them in school, so it was quite an expedition.)

I said, "Sure, I'd love to."

Blanche talked to Bob and set up the appointment, and I went over one evening and saw him. Bob told me he was on his way to the Basque Country. DRI had hired him and his wife, Joyce, to look into this whole Basque studies program idea and to see how it would be received in the Basque Country.

Bob told me, "I've been hired as a consultant on this deal, and I'm going to try and make some informal contacts over there. I'm going to put together a bibliography, because back here we really don't know what there is, and Joyce is going to be taking a lot of slides. DRI is going to pay her for shooting a lot of photographs."

In the end, Bob put together a bibliography of, say, 1,000 items, which was very small compared to what was out there. Jon Bilbao,³ a Basque bibliographer, was doing his 300,000-item bibliography at the same time, but they didn't know each other. Bob, in effect, was duplicating Jon's effort on a very tiny scale.

It was kind of amateurish in a lot of ways. It was very ad hoc. I mean, it was like they were just making it up as they went along, because Bob really didn't know much. He had a few contacts in the Basque Country. For instance, he knew his cousin, Jon Mirande, a Basque writer and author, and a few other people, since he'd been over to the Basque Country, and, of course, he had family there. He had made a trip back with his father that resulted in his book, *Sweet Promised Land*.

Bob said to me, "That's as far as I'm going to go with this, because I'm not a Basque scholar. I'm a Basque. I'm going over there for a sabbatical year to write a novel, but I don't pretend to be a Basque scholar. I don't know when this thing's going to take off, and I'm not sure where I'm going to be yet, but let's stay in touch and see what happens."

I said, "Sure." I was very pleased, and he was quite generous with his time and everything.

So I knew about the program, or I knew about the idea, the concept. In this regard, I have always considered Bob Laxalt, Jon

Bilbao, and myself as the founders of the Basque Studies Program. We all had different roles at different stages. Bob was involved in the initial steps of developing the Basque Studies Program within DRI. However, he never intended to take a role as an academic, but to provide help when needed. He was totally supportive. Bob was very clear from the beginning that his main interest was the University of Nevada Press.

Meanwhile, there were three people in Reno who got involved in the idea of a Basque studies program and started to run with it. Wendell Mordy's wife, Brooke, was studying anthropology through correspondence at the time. (I think she might have even gotten her doctorate before it was over, but she at least had a master's.) Wendell Mordy's major assistant, Joy Leland, was doing the same thing. Joy was his "Girl Friday," his right-hand person. Joy and Brooke were pursuing their graduate studies, but I can't remember at what universities. I think maybe Brooke was pursuing at least some of it at the University of Utah. Those two were part-time at this new Center for Western North American Studies as it was getting off the ground. The third person was William "Bill" Jacobsen, a linguist in the English Department.

Around 1962 Warren d'Azevedo was brought to Reno by DRI to be the first chairman of the Center for Western North American Studies.⁴ Warren was sort of torn—rather than putting all of his energy into the center, he really wanted to see an anthropology department at the University of Nevada. He was working out at Stead⁵ and trying to get the DRI's center off the ground, but his heart was really into building a department at the university. He very quickly negotiated a transfer from DRI to the university. I think he went into the Sociology Department, which then was called Sociology and Anthropology, even though there was only one full-time anthropologist on its faculty, Arnold Strickon.

When I was a freshman and sophomore at the University of Nevada, I had classes from Mary Sellers, an anthropologist in the Sociology Department, who had to teach sociology half-time. Then I studied for a year at the University of Madrid. When I came back for my senior year, the university had hired Strickon, who was quite good.

Warren came and worked with Carl Backman, the chairman of Sociology, to create, essentially, a schism—a separate Anthropology Department. This was the 1960s, and anthropology was a hot field in American academia, and it was expanding across

the country at the time. By the time I came back to Reno in 1967, the Anthropology Department had four positions—d’Azevedo, Don Fowler, Mel Aikens, and Floyd Sharrock.

So Warren came to the University of Nevada, but he was still connected with DRI as the nominal director of this center. Mordy wasn’t real happy with the situation. He had hired d’Azevedo, and d’Azevedo’s loyalties were split, and there was a bit of tension between DRI and the university in those days. There was competition. Also, DRI didn’t like their personnel to teach, because they felt that they should be writing grant proposals. The institution lived, and probably still does to a large degree, off of soft money—the indirect cost recovery from grants. I mean, if Warren was down at the university campus building an anthro department, that was time taken away from writing proposals and bringing in grants to DRI. There was that ambivalence.

The whole idea that social sciences and humanities could survive in the DRI-type climate was a little naïve, because of the magnitude of our grants. It was hard to get a big team grant in the social sciences and humanities, because it is kind of a lone-wolf job, and you don’t have a lot of lab expenses. A *huge* grant for us would be \$50,000, and DRI might get \$10,000 or \$12,000 or \$20,000 in indirect costs. Well, that’s nothing. But if DRI got \$1,000,000 for hydrology, they could maybe get \$300,000 or \$400,000 or \$500,000 in indirect costs from the federal government. So that grant was worth ten times our grant to DRI. We were stillborn, and our kind of work really wasn’t going to make it out there. I don’t care whether it was Warren d’Azevedo’s ideas or my ideas or Mary Ellen Glass’s ideas,⁶ but we all ended up out of DRI.

Actually, when I came back in 1967, there was nobody at the Center for Western North American Studies. d’Azevedo had left, and there was a vacancy in the directorship of the center. Then, Wilbur Shepperson of the History Department assumed the directorship, but on an acting basis, for about a year. Probably during my second year at the Basque Studies Program, DRI had hired Don Fowler as the director of the center, and he became my supervisor. He was hired out of UNR’s Anthropology Department. He was one of d’Azevedo’s protégés at the time. Then Fowler eventually left DRI and went to the Anthropology Department full time. (Fowler retired in 2004 and became an emeritus faculty member after a forty-two year career on campus.)



"DRI had hired [Don] Fowler as the director of the center, and he became my supervisor. He was hired out of UNR's Anthropology Department. He was one of d'Azevedo's protégés at the time." Don Fowler (left), Director of DRI's Social Sciences Center, and Jon Bilbao at UNR, June 1978.

Before I came to DRI, I went to the Basque Country from 1963 to 1965. I was already done with about a year's worth of fieldwork in Echalar in Navarra, and I was going to switch to Murélaga in Bizkaia when I decided to go see Bob Laxalt. He was in St. Jean Pied de Port. I got in touch with him—I forget how, probably a letter in those days—and he said, "Come on over."

So I went there, and Bob told me all of the things that he'd been doing that year. He had met with Basque scholar Philippe Veyrin, who was very ill. Philippe Veyrin was very excited about the idea of a Basque studies program. Bob, on his own initiative, had secured from him a commitment to sell—not to give, but to sell—his personal library to the University of Nevada if the university library wanted to buy his collection. It was about 750 volumes on Basques. Bob told me the story. Veyrin had said, "You know, Bob, I *really* want to see that happen. I can't give you the books, because my wife's going to need some money for them, but you'll have right of first refusal."

Bob had already contacted the director of the library at the university, Dave Heron, who was, by the way, a great guy. Dave

committed to buying Veyrin's library, with the help of a very well known regent at that time, Molly Knudtsen, who was a big benefactor. Molly committed, I think, \$6,000 for Veyrin's 750 volumes as a kind of loan to the effort, but a loan that didn't have to be paid back. Bob had political connections in the sense that his brother, Paul Laxalt, was then the governor of the state of Nevada.⁷ Bob was very friendly with Molly, who was quite supportive of starting the University of Nevada Press and the Anthropology Department.

Molly was kind of an amateur archaeologist, and she had a ranch out in central Nevada, so she knew a lot of Basques. Her relations with Basque shepherders hadn't always been great, but she had some neighbors that were Basque ranchers, so she would tell stories about being a cattleman and that kind of thing. Nothing huge and dramatic, but there was always a little bit of tension there.

Molly believed in the idea of DRI taking on a Basque studies program as one of its initiatives. In fact, she was one of the first people that I was introduced to by Bob Laxalt when I came here to start the program. Bob was introducing me around and said, "You've got to meet Molly Knudtsen." Bob and I drove out to her ranch, and we spent a couple of days out there. We told her what we were doing, and she gave us a little bit of money. I think she gave me \$1,000. It was probably the first donation that I had anything to do with.

By the time I saw Bob, Veyrin had died, and Bob was in the process of making the arrangements to have that library shipped to Reno. The Veyrin collection was very valuable as the foundation for the Basque collection. When I first came to Reno I could appreciate that, because I had a personal library largely dealing with Hegoalde [Spanish-Basque Country], and Veyrin's library largely dealt with Iparralde [French-Basque Country], and that was harder to get.

Bob had also met an anthropologist named Morton Levine, who was from Vassar College. Morton was doing fieldwork in the French-Basque area of the Basque Country at the time.

Bob said, "I think this thing's going to go. There seems to be a lot of interest in the Basque Country. When I get back, I'm going to recommend to Mordy that he go forward, but I'm not going to do it. I'm going back to my job as director of the

University of Nevada Press, so why don't you think of going back to Reno? I'll put your name in."

Bob kind of half recruited me to come to Reno eventually, but he really had no authorization to offer me anything. He was just planting seeds. I wasn't at all committed to the idea of going back to Reno. However, I said, "I'd like to consider it, but I've got a lot to do. I have to go to another field site, then I've got to go back to Chicago. I still have a little bit of coursework to finish. I want to write my MA thesis, and I want to complete my PhD dissertation before I take a job. So I'm two, maybe three years away optimistically, probably more."

Bob said, "I don't know what's going to happen, but at least keep it in mind. Maybe it'll be up and running by then, and maybe you'd like to come and be part of it." Anyway, we did stay in touch.

I returned to Chicago, probably in September of 1965. I was taking a few classes, and I insisted on writing my MA, because I wasn't sure I was going to get a PhD. I wanted a fallback, because I had a wife and a child. I thought, "I can teach at a community college. If I flunk my doctoral exams, at least I'll have something." At Chicago they didn't want you to do that. You could if you insisted, but they didn't want you to.

I wrote a master's thesis, and my advisor said, "Well, write about something that won't be in the way of your doctoral dissertation," which was on rural exodus and emigration.

I said, "OK." I had a bunch of stuff about funerals and funerary ritual. So I started working that material, and I got more and more fascinated by it, and I wrote a thesis called *Death in Murélagá*. Then the following year I wrote my dissertation. (I transferred to Berkeley for my second year of graduate work, so I kind of lost contact with the whole Chicago scene. It's a long story, but I later took my Chicago PhD comps off campus at Berkeley, because my mentor back in Chicago, Sol Tax, arranged for it. I got a high pass.)

In the fall of 1965, while I was still writing my MA thesis, I went to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings in Denver. Warren d'Azevedo, Joy Leland, and Wendell and Brooke Mordy wanted to meet with me in Denver, as they were going to the meetings.

All four of them showed up. Wendell was there to recruit me, because they hadn't been able to find anybody to do the

Basque Program in all those years. It turned out that there just wasn't anybody in the Anglo-American world qualified to do it. I don't know whether they ever approached Morton Levine, but I kind of doubt it. Morton was at Vassar, so he probably wouldn't have come anyway. They didn't know about Jon Bilbao, and, of course, Jon Bilbao didn't have a PhD. That would have been problematic from DRI's standpoint, because Jon couldn't be a principal investigator. You have to have your doctorate to sign a grant proposal, so that wouldn't have worked.

They really did a recruiting number on me. They said, "We'd like you to come out at the end of this year. You can start the program, and you can write your dissertation in Reno."

I thought about it, and I said, "OK, I'll take the job, but not until I have my dissertation in hand."

I was afraid. One of my teachers, when I was an undergraduate, had never finished her doctorate. She was ABD (All But Dissertation). She took a job, and she never got around to writing her dissertation. That was not that uncommon, and I thought, "Boy, you know, I'm supposed to build this program. Who knows how much time I'll have to write this dissertation? And I have a fellowship, so I can pay my bills. I'll just sit here and finish, and when I'm done, I'll go." In those days the academic marketplace was huge and was great, particularly in anthropology, and particularly for graduates of Chicago, because Chicago was listed as the number-one school in the country. So I wasn't worried about a job per se.

For instance, in the fall of 1966 I went to the AAA meetings in Pittsburgh, and I had three different job offers there. I didn't take them, as I'd made this commitment to Reno. Plus, Reno was more lucrative. The highest job offer I got was to teach Anthro 101 for \$9,800 a year, and Mordy had offered to pay me \$11,000. I was going to make \$100 a month more if I came to Reno to start the Basque Studies Program. I guess that was probably a little factor. However, I was a little ambivalent about it. There was a piece of me that liked the idea, but going back to your hometown after having been away for so long, it didn't seem like a great leap forward. Particularly in those days, nobody went back to their hometown.

Mordy communicated to me, "We'll hold it open, but when you come to Reno to see your family for Christmas, I want to see you." A month later I went out to dinner with him. He kept in

real close touch, because I think he was afraid I'd take a job somewhere else—that I'd have second thoughts and wouldn't come.

Meanwhile, Brooke Mordy, Joy Leland, and Bill Jacobsen wrote a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) proposing a Basque studies program. They actually submitted the proposal with my name on it as the anticipated coordinator of the program, and probably with my vita, such as it was—I hadn't published anything at that point. The proposal was pretty institutional, and it was pretty ambitious: three or four positions, including my salary. It was for a short term, and there was going to be some work on the Basque language, which was, of course, Bill's input. I really don't remember all of the details. Shortly after I got to Reno, we received notification that it was denied, so it didn't go anywhere. [In 1972, Bill Jacobsen became the linguistic coordinator of the Basque Studies Program.]

I arrived in Reno in June of 1967. As soon as I graduated from Chicago, I traveled across the country with my belongings, my wife, and my son. I started my new job on July 1, just in time for the Basque festival cycle. I was a kid—I was twenty-seven years old, and I had very little experience. I was brand-new with a green degree. At the first meeting we had, Mordy said, "I don't know what to call you."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"I don't think we should call you 'director' yet, because there's just you, and you don't even have a secretary. So you're not really directing anything. Why don't we call you 'coordinator'?"

"OK, that's fine with me."

Mordy said, "We'll change it later." Well, it became actually a point of personal and professional pride for me never to change it. I was coordinator of the Basque Studies Program the day I retired. We now have a director of the Center for Basque Studies. They changed the name in 1999. But I always kept the title of coordinator.

Mordy thought that the Basques of the American West would open their wallets, and all we had to do was run around and tell them we were going to have this program. He said, "Well, you can have your own building . . .," and this, that, and the other thing. There was a piece of Mordy that was empire building.

Mordy brought a fundraiser from the University of California, Berkeley, to sit down with me. The fundraiser talked about all

these ways we could raise money: "We can do this, and we can do that."

Bob Laxalt, I think, might have been at the meeting, and, of course, they thought of requesting some state support, since Bob's brother, Paul, was the governor. At the time, DRI didn't have state funding for anything, or it had very minimal state funding. It might have had Mordy's salary, but basically, DRI was launched as a soft-money operation, a research institute that was going to live on its own grants. Mordy didn't really have great access to the university budgeting process in those days. Over time, I think DRI has become certainly *more* a part of the state budget system than it was, but then it was really in its infancy.

The idea was to run around the American West and raise money at Basque festivals, because the festival cycle was starting. There were several Basque festivals around the American West, such as in Elko, Ely, Chino, and Bakersfield. They were spin-offs, really, of the big national festival held in Sparks in 1959. Bob Laxalt and Pete Echeverria had been part of that.⁸ In Boise, of course, there was one which had been going since before the national festival in Sparks, but there weren't a lot. The whole idea of clubs and festivals was also in its infancy.

I didn't know the first thing about Basques in the American West! I knew a fair bit about European Basques. I'd lived there for two years, and I'd read a lot. I'd just written an MA and a doctoral dissertation on Basque subjects. When I was growing up in Reno, I went to the Catholic high school with some Basque kids such as the Gastañagas, and I thought they were Italians. I mean, Gastañaga, it ends in *a*—it must be Italian, you know, because mainly we were Irish-American kids and Italian-American kids. There was a sprinkling of Basques, but I didn't know anything about Basques when I was in high school.

During that summer of 1967 while I was traveling to the festivals, I would start looking into the situation of Basques in the American West. I didn't even know their distribution. I was using Bob Laxalt's file from the mail he got after he published *Sweet Promised Land* and the mailing lists that they generated from the 1959 Basque festival in Sparks. So I had a bit of an idea, but in those days I don't know if anybody really knew about the distribution. The Basques in Boise weren't in that much touch

with the Basques in Bakersfield. You had the northern tier of Bizkaians [those from the province of Bizkaia in Spain], and out in Montana and Wyoming you had Navarrese and French Basques; the twain kind of met in Nevada. Now we know that, but I didn't know that at the time, and I really didn't know where I should be going to interview people.

I took a tape recorder with me, and I started doing some interviews, including one with Beltran Paris, at the Ely festival. Then several years later, after we finished *Amerikanuak*, I was trying to think what I was going to do next. I happened to listen to those tapes, and I got very stimulated to go back out there and follow up with Beltran.

In the fall of 1967 I attended the AAA meetings in Washington, D. C. Morton Levine and a guy named Grant McCall were also there. Grant McCall was an anthropologist who'd been running around the American West, even before me, doing his MA research at San Francisco State University. He ended up writing an MA on Basques in the American West. We had driven out to that Basque festival in Ely together. Grant knew Nevada was going to be doing a Basque studies program.

Jon Bilbao's arrival; fundraising efforts It was in Washington that I met Jon Bilbao. I had never met him before, despite the fact that Basque philologist Luis "Koldo" Mitxelena had urged me, two summers before, when I was in the Basque Country, to go over to St. Jean de Luz to meet with him. They were very close. Jon Bilbao had helped Mitxelena when Mitxelena was basically destitute. Jon was a bibliographer who had been expelled from Spain for his Basque nationalist politics. He was teaching Spanish on the East Coast of the United States to earn his living while he was doing a Basque bibliography.

We were in this hotel room in Washington, D.C. in November, and I was six months into my job. Jon and Morton were there. Jon was anxious to see something serious happen in Basque studies in the United States. Grant McCall was also there. Grant was just getting his MA, so he was going to continue to be a doctoral student somewhere else. Eventually he got his degree in Europe, and today he lives in Australia. He ended up doing research on Easter Island. He hasn't done anything Basque related for thirty or thirty-five years. At the time it wasn't clear what he

was going to do. One thing that was evident was that Grant was not far enough along in his career to be part of anything that we were going to be discussing at that meeting, but he was there.

Morton asked me to come up to Vassar, so I did. There, Jon told me about his efforts to start a Basque program at Indiana University based on folklore, because they had the major folklore department in the country. Jon had kind of pitched Basque folklore at them, and they had been interested, but nothing happened. He and Morton were working on the idea, with Margaret Mead and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, of doing some kind of a Basque program tied into whatever Morton was doing at Vassar. Jon was real interested in and supportive of that. That was their main thrust, and then here's this thing going in Nevada—me running around asking Basques for money.

Morton tried to talk me into leaving Nevada and coming to Vassar. He said, "You come here. I've worked on the French-Basque side, you've worked on the other side of the frontier, and we'll do this program together. Margaret Mead is interested, and we'll tie this thing into the American Museum of Natural History." In a way, I guess it was a little bit tempting. But you know what? It really wasn't that tempting!

I wasn't real comfortable with Morton, because I didn't think Morton had done very much in a year of field research in the Basque Country. I got the sense that he needed me to come to Vassar to solidify his effort. I could just tell from talking to him he didn't know very much, you know! And he stayed . . . I forget in what Basque village, but he hardly ever went out. He was kind of a reclusive guy, and he wasn't much of an anthropologist. He wasn't a very outgoing guy anyway. His wife was a pianist, and she'd play the piano, and he'd stay in the house.

Morton published an article on primitive cave art, but that was not based on field research. Then he did some serology. He got hooked up with a medical doctor, and they took some blood samples, so he did a little bit of work on the Rh negative issue. But really it was kind of strange, because he was essentially a social anthropologist, and he really didn't do much Basque social anthropology. I don't think that he ever published on any social anthropological aspect of Basque society or culture. So I wasn't impressed by Morton at that level.

However, I liked Jon Bilbao a lot, and I asked Jon if he would come to Reno and give a lecture in the spring. So Jon came and gave a talk about the Basque language, and it was well attended. Jon and I were hanging out together for two or three days. We started talking, and Jon was getting frustrated because nothing had happened with that Indiana University project. Jon was getting impatient and was starting to wonder whether Morton could deliver in New York. I started picking his brain about what a Basque program ought to do, because basically we were making it up. Nobody knew what a Basque program might be. And, of course, I was inventing it in part around my interests, because I was the only person. Jon got all pumped up and excited, because for him it was sort of an intellectual exercise.

Jon talked about the importance of bibliography and of building up a library collection somewhere outside of Europe. We had the Veyrin collection coming, and that was going to be a start. Jon was the kind of guy that would throw out two ideas a minute and twelve an hour. Two of them were good, and ten of them were dicey, so you had to be a little careful. I learned later that Jon was a fount of ideas but without priority. He was just a *colmena* [beehive] of ideas.

One day, Jon and I were in my office, and he was telling me about a collection of documents in the possession of the Intxausti family in Ustaritz that had been in the Philippines. Anyway, Jon said, "This family's got this chest in their attic full of documents regarding Basque nationalism, and I'm afraid they're going to disintegrate or be destroyed through humidity or dry rot or rodents or whatever! They should be microfilmed."

I said, "Jon, how much would it cost to do that?"

Jon said, "It'd cost about \$500, and I'd do it myself." He was just picking out a number.

I said, "Well, OK." And \$500 in those days was real money. I was being paid \$11,000 a year, so that'll give you an idea.

I picked up the phone, and I called Dave Heron, and I explained the deal, and Dave said, "OK, you've got the \$500."

So I hung up the phone, and I looked at Jon and said, "OK. It's a deal."

He said, "It's a deal?"

"Yes! It's a go."

He looked at me, and I thought he was going to cry. He said, "I can't believe it! That's the first time, after all of this talk about, 'Yes, we're interested in this. We're interested in that.'"

All of a sudden, with one telephone call, we got the \$500 commitment for him, and he was amazed. In fact, he said that the main reason he later accepted a position with the Basque Studies Program was because of that phone call. He'd say that to me many times in the future. We didn't have a portable microfilm unit then, but we bought it for that project. We gave him the camera, and Jon carried out the project the next summer, in 1969.

Then I took him to the airport, and I asked him, "Jon, if there was a way to bring you to Reno, would you come?"

He said, "Yes."

The spring of 1968, I was getting really discouraged, so I went to see Mordy, and I said, "I'm really tired of this. I mean, I'm by myself, and I'm fronting for an idea that is not working out." By then they had probably spent almost \$40,000 to raise \$10,000 between my salary, travel expenses, brochures, et cetera. Our efforts to raise money from the private sector were over. I was an amateur, and I was green, but I was smart enough to know that this wasn't working. I was also getting discouraged professionally.

Mordy asked me, "OK. What would it take to keep you here?"

"Well, there's this guy, Jon Bilbao, and we just had him on campus. Jon is the leading Basque bibliographer, and he's got all these contacts, but he doesn't have a doctorate. If we could bring him here, I think then we would have a real program. At least there'd be two of us as opposed to just me."

Mordy said, "I'm willing to make a nine-month commitment of \$1,000 a month. He would be a consultant. That's all I'm willing to do."

I thought, "Oh, man. Jon's going to walk away from a job back east and come out to Reno for an offer like that? I mean, that's ridiculous." But I said, "Well, thank you. I am glad to know that."

Then Mordy said, "How is this Bilbao? How good is he?"

"Well, I think he's very good."

Then he looked at me, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you, I hope he is, because if he comes, I'm going to be watching him, and I'm going to be watching you. I want you to know something, Bill: first raters hire first raters; second raters hire third raters."

So Mordy was saying, "I'm going to be judging you by this deal if I hire him." Then when I got up to leave, the last thing he said was, "Are you doing any work?"

"I just told you. I've been running around."

He said, "No, no. Real work, your work."

"In the nighttime, in the evenings, and on weekends, I'm rewriting my MA thesis, because my advisor, Julian Pitt-Rivers, wants me to publish it."

He said, "*Good*, because I know that you won't stay unless you're doing something that you care about, some real work."

Then I called Jon, and I told him, "Jon, this is the deal. Please don't laugh."

And Jon didn't even hesitate. He said, "I'm going!" He was so tired of teaching Spanish for a living and was so anxious to come out and give it a try, that he committed! Boom! We eventually hired him as a consultant in 1968. That's how we got through the first year of the Basque Studies Program.

I don't remember precisely when Jon came. At that time he was going to the Basque Country during some summers, so my guess is that during the spring semester he probably resigned at Washington College, in Maryland, where he was teaching. Then he probably went to the Basque Country, which might have been the first year that they let him back in Spain, or gave him back his passport, since he'd been exiled. (He'd stay in St. Jean de Luz, and then his kids, Iban and Amale, and his wife, Marta, would come over from Getxo near Bilbao. Jon and Marta were pretty estranged by then, but they weren't divorced. Mitxelena and other people would go to St. Jean de Luz to see him.)

Then that fall or winter of 1968, when the Western Range Association held its annual meeting in Reno, Bob Laxalt got his brother Paul to sponsor a dinner at the Governor's Mansion as a fundraiser. This guy from California was advising us, and he was giving us the sort of standard how-you-raise-money thing. I don't remember all the details. I was certainly new and ambivalent about it—I didn't like asking people for money—but we brought maybe twenty people together in Carson who were on the board of the Western Range Association. They were pretty successful ranchers from around the American West. They were all delighted to get to know Paul Laxalt, because he was *the* most successful Basque politician in the American West at the time.



"They were all delighted to get to know Paul Laxalt, because he was the most successful Basque politician in the American West at the time." Fundraising dinner at the Governor's Mansion in Carson City, Nevada, for the Basque Studies Program, 1968. Bob Laxalt is in the first row on the far left, and Paul Laxalt is in the first row, third from the left.

Paul was gracious, but we blew it. They announced this fundraising campaign, but we didn't put the arm on anybody, so everybody went away without really closing the deal. It was kind of funny. We asked anybody that wanted to send some money back . . . Well, it was real bad. I know today that we probably should have had proper professional fundraisers. Of course, professional fundraising was not as developed as it is today.

Afterwards, I got a check back for about \$100 from the Etchart family in Montana, saying, "Well, we hope this will help." It was nice of them. But *nobody* else sent us a penny at that point. The only two that gave us money were people that had been invited to the dinner but couldn't come. One was Gene Gastañaga, a casino owner from Reno—he sent us \$1,000 and raised some other money for us. Then there was

Mrs. Alfrida Teague in southern California. Mrs. Teague's maiden name was Poco, and she was of French-Basque descent, from a ranch up in Smoke Creek Valley. She'd married a guy named Milton Teague, a very wealthy and influential man who was the CEO of Sunkist Fruits. Mrs. Teague sent us \$1,000 initially. Then she put the arm on some people in the Los Angeles area, including Robert Erburu, a lawyer of The Times Mirror Co., who sent us \$500 at the time.⁹ Mrs. Teague raised \$7,000 or \$8,000, as I recall. Eventually, two or three years later, a rancher in Colorado did give us another \$1,000, if I remember correctly.

So at that point I had had another summer out there going to the Basque festivals, and also I was doing a bunch of interviewing. I was beginning to get a better feel for the distribution of Basques and some of the issues, having done some oral histories.

We were still based at DRI, but I was teaching part-time down at the university in the Anthro Department, and Jon was teaching Basque. That was probably the biggest class we've ever had in Basque. He had about forty students, and he barely knew Basque. I mean, he was not *euskaldun* [a Basque speaker], not even *euskaldunberri* [a new Basque language speaker] really, and he



Dinner at the Gastañaga's residence in Reno, c. 1971, in honor of the first significant private donation to the Basque Studies Program. Gastañaga donated \$1,000 per month for several years. Left to right, seated: Patricia Douglass, UNR President N. Edd Miller, Ellen and Gene Gastañaga, Nena Miller, and Bob Laxalt. Standing: Bill Douglass, Eloy and Amparo Placer, Jon Bilbao, Linda Gastañaga, John Laxalt, and Joyce Laxalt.

wasn't hugely motivated to study the language. I don't remember Jon really trying to learn Basque. I think he'd pretty much given up on that. (Bill Jacobsen, for instance, knows a lot about the structure of Basque, but he doesn't speak it.)

Jon was using a Basque grammar, and I think he was about two lessons ahead of the students. We had a *large* turnout for that first class, but after that we didn't, and I don't know why. I mean, people liked his teaching; they liked Jon and everything else. I don't think it was like he was a disaster as a teacher, but I've never been able to explain that. It was the novelty, but at a university you would think every four years you could have novelty, because students come and students go.

Of course, now I know that the Center for Basque Studies has a decent attendance in its classes. I know Basque Studies faculty like Gloria Totoricagüena, Joseba Zulaika, and Sandra "Sandy" Ott's classes have a lot of students. I mean, now it's all pretty mainstream, but in those days I taught a Basque culture class, and I had about fifteen students.

Meanwhile, I had written a grant proposal to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to study Basque identity maintenance in Elko. The grant was for about \$30,000, and it was for a yearlong project. There was money in there for an assistant and for some interviewers, because I was going to apply a questionnaire. Shortly after Jon got here, or maybe during that winter, I was informed that I got the grant. It was the first one we ever received.

Of course, the clock was ticking on Jon's deal because he had a nine-month commitment at \$1,000. I was teaching this Old World Basque culture class in Elko, and I hired a couple of people from my class to do some interviews for me there. It was probably the spring semester, because I asked Jon to come out and give a lecture on the language—he knew a lot more about it than I did. So I'd drive out every two weeks on Fridays, and I would teach three hours Friday night, and three hours Saturday morning, and then I would come back to Reno. It was supposedly a three-hour-a-week deal, but because of the distance and the driving, I would jam two into one.

We were riding along, and we were in a big, big, big snowstorm. In fact, it probably didn't even make sense to try and go. We were driving about twenty-five miles an hour, so it took us about ten or eleven hours. We got there just in time for

the class. We were in the car all day, and I had told him then that I was doing this work in Elko, but I was beginning to be concerned that a study of just the Basques of Elko didn't make a lot of sense. But because of the NIMH grant, we had to concentrate on Elko. I asked him if he'd be interested in collaborating with me on a book that would be on Basques of the American West.

I said, "Jon, I'll hire you in that position as the assistant on the NIMH grant. We'll go to Elko for the summer. You'll work in the archives and do a little interviewing in town, and I'll go out and live in the sheep camps for awhile. We'll stay at the Star Hotel, so we'll also experience the hotel life, and then we'll go from there," which we did. Well, that day was the genesis, or the germ, of *Amerikanuak*.

Then we wrote a couple of other grant proposals. The problem, of course, with trying to live on little grants like that was you never had time to write up your results. It's a treadmill, you know. By then I had decided I wanted to go to Italy to look at another rural sending area of European immigration, where there was population decline because the economy had collapsed, rather than to go back to the Basque Country. I thought I'd learn more about Basque immigration if I had something to bounce it off of, to compare it to.

I knew that Italy, particularly southern Italy, was one of Europe's major seedbeds of emigrants. Also, I knew from reading the literature that rural southern Italian society was very distinctive and very different from Basque society. So I figured that there were enough cultural, social, and historical differences between the two to study all the same issues that I'd studied in the Basque Country, and indeed that was true. I felt like I learned more about Basque emigration and rural social structure by going to southern Italy than if I had gone back to the Basque Country and continued to work in Murélagu and Echalar, or gone to some other field sites in the Basque Country. I think getting that comparative dimension taught me more about what made Basque emigration different than if I had stayed immersed in the Basque topic. Plus, I was also looking at Basque immigration from this end, and I was hammering it pretty hard between my dissertation work in the Pyrenees and then studying Basque sheepherders in the American West, and then Jon and I expanded that to Latin America. I thought, "I'm due for something else."

I got involved with two Italianists—two anthropologists. Peter Benedict from Chicago and Connie Cronin from Arizona were my graduate student peers at Chicago, and we were going to go to Italy and do a study together. Connie had worked in Sicily, and Peter was of Italian descent. So we wrote a grant proposal together to the NSF, but it didn't get funded. Peter pulled out and went back to Turkey where he had done his first fieldwork, and Connie didn't go forward either. I forget why not. I was left alone with this Italian project idea, but I wanted to do it.

Finally, I got a grant and went to Italy and did that work on my own in 1972 and 1973. By then I also realized that the sheep industry of the American West was collapsing. At the time, another of my interests was the mining camp of Tonopah. My father was out of there, and I had gotten interested in the mining camp as a failed phenomenon as well. I don't think that the first proposal included Tonopah. I put together this larger proposal about studying failed economies and the kinds of strategies people developed when, all of a sudden, their economic assumptions collapsed. The sheep industry was down, the mining economy collapsed in the American West, and the peasant economy in southern Italy went downhill.

I had previously proposed unsuccessfully the study in southern Italy, and I'd had a couple of grant proposals to study Basques of the West turned down. So I basically took those proposals, wedded them together, dressed them up a little bit, and submitted them to a very special and very small program called the Research Scientist Career Development Award, which was a branch of the NIMH. They also had the Research Scientist Award.

Those two programs were very elitist in the sense that they only gave a handful of grants each year. The Research Scientist Award was for senior scholars, and the Research Scientist Career Development Award was for junior people like myself. I think the year I got mine they gave out seventeen in the entire United States, and they did about the same thing with the Research Scientist Award. You received five years of salary support and \$20,000 of research funds that you could use any way you wanted.

And *boom*, I got through the screening process. NIMH sent three people to talk to Wendell Mordy's successor, John Ward, the new president of DRI. I mean, it was a very, very thorough kind of deal, and next thing I knew, I got the grant.

Jon and I had already started working on *Amerikanuak*. We were researching it from about 1969 through 1971 and then eventually writing *Amerikanuak*. We had a division of labor. Jon was working on certain chapters, and I was working on others, and then he would give me his stuff, and I would rewrite it so it would be one voice. I filtered Jon's input through my own filter so that we'd have one style for the whole argument. (Actually, Joseba Zulaika and I used the same procedure much later when we collaborated on a book on terrorism, *Terror and Taboo*, 1996). Otherwise, it would have been a strange manuscript, particularly since Jon wasn't a native English speaker. We were probably done with *Amerikanuak* by 1973, but it took about two years to get the thing out. Just the editing and publishing process was at least two years. It was very frustrating, because it was taking so long. Then, we probably did a little bit of rewriting as we got new information, even during the editing process.

At the same time, we had also begun the Basque Book Series within the University of Nevada Press. The series became an integral part of the Basque Studies Program in the sense that I took on its editorship. It was a time-consuming thing, but I was doing it as the coordinator of the Basque Studies Program in a way, although it wasn't part of my job description. [Bill was an editor of the University of Nevada Press Basque Book Series from 1969 to 1999.]

It's also fair to say that Jon Bilbao was putting a whole bunch of his effort in those early years into his bibliography, *Eusko Bibliographia*, because when he came here in 1968, I don't think the first volume was out. *Eusko Bibliographia* came out over a number of years, and the first volume was probably about 1969.¹⁰ Jon would spend probably 80 percent of his time working on *Eusko Bibliographia*, because he was always preparing the next volume while he had to proofread the last one. Proofreading *Eusko Bibliographia* was no joke. So then he'd have all his *galaradas* [galley proofs] from the publisher, and he was under a lot of pressure all the time. He would be reading the *galaradas* in one hand, and then he had his *fichero* [card catalog] with which he was generating the next volume in the other. So Jon was bogged down in that for a few years, really, and it was his main commitment. All those were the central focuses of the Basque Studies Program in the early years.

From DRI to UNR; As I said, I had received five years of funding, and Jon didn't. I was getting concerned for him, because
Bob Laxalt as advocate Jon's position at DRI was very tenuous. Jon couldn't be a principal investigator on a grant, because he didn't have a doctorate. He was a humanist and didn't really fit DRI, which largely focused on natural science. Social science was a stretch for them, so a humanist like Jon was over the top. Plus, Jon was very interested in instruction at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and developing the Basque Library, where he was spending a lot of his time.

That's when we began to negotiate a transfer of the Basque Studies Program to UNR, as well as getting one position as part of the move to protect Jon. It was in *part* to essentially see if we could get a state-funded position for Jon Bilbao. It was going to be a library effort, which reflected, of course, Jon's bibliography and library collection development background. That's how all of that happened. It took us *awhile* to make the transfer, but at DRI they knew I was working on it, so they kept paying Jon a salary. We didn't have grant support really for him, but they just sucked it up. In other words, the president of DRI and the president of UNR both agreed that the transfer made sense.

Actually, the Oral History Program transferred from DRI to the university library sooner than we did, which became the model for moving the Basque Studies Program. When we started the Basque Studies Program, Oral History antedated us by a year or two. [The Oral History Program was founded in July of 1964 as part of DRI and was transferred in 1969.] There was a lady, Mary Ellen Glass, who was Tom King's predecessor and the founder of that program. She was very uncomfortable at DRI, because she was a humanist, and she was not having a lot of success getting DRI-type grants and surviving. She was under a lot of pressure to produce, and she couldn't.

There were two or three occasions in the political history of the program when Bob Laxalt was very instrumental. For instance, Bob helped me negotiate with the chancellor of the university system, Neil Humphrey, a position for Jon Bilbao and the transfer of the program from DRI to UNR.

The problem was that the chancellor had decided that nobody within the university could approach the legislature directly. It

was a very, very firm rule. All the chancellors had the same rule, and it gets violated a little bit, but pretty much it's a firm rule.

The whole idea of transferring the program down from DRI to UNR and getting a position for Jon Bilbao came shortly after they had closed UNR's budget process, which only happens every two years. The process was already in motion, and it was really too late for me to put in any kind of a formal request. Basically, we would have had to wait two extra years, but the presidents of DRI and UNR wanted to do the transfer right then. So everything was ready except the legislative and the budgetary process, because the biennial budgets were already in place. The train had left the station for that year because of the legislative biennium.

Paul Laxalt helped us at that point, and Bob did a lot of lobbying in the legislature. I mean, Bob was a very political animal. He used to write Paul's speeches, and he was a part of Paul's inner circle and one of his advisors, so Bob knew most of the politicians in the state, not as director of the University of Nevada Press but as Paul's right-hand man. Well, I don't know if he was his right-hand man, but he was part of the Laxalt political entourage.

For example, Humphrey used to ask Bob to get involved with the university's budget in the legislature. Bob was kind of half a lobbyist every legislative session. Bob was in Carson City always talking about the University of Nevada Press budget, and he managed to get quite a bit of funding from the legislature for the University of Nevada Press over the years, but he also did other things at the legislature.

So Bob took me to Humphrey, and Bob explained the situation. Humphrey said, "Bob, you have your own connections in the legislature. If you want to work on this outside the framework, that's OK. In other words, I will not be upset if you get this approved as a special legislative item and you get it put into the university budget."

Bob went to Carson City, and he lobbied real hard. He lobbied William "Bill" Raggio, who was his next-door neighbor in Reno at that time. (They weren't next-door neighbors when Bob died, because Bob had already moved out to Washoe Valley, but their kids had gone to school together.) They were very close, and Raggio was the most powerful guy in the legislature. He was also a Republican, which meant he worked closely with the Laxalt faction, because they were Republicans.

Finally, we got the Basque Studies Program and a position for Jon Bilbao as part of the university budget. The program was transferred in 1972. It moved into the Getchell Library building, into two really little rooms downstairs along with the books, which, by then, we had already been using for some time. At that point, the program and the library were housed together.

While Jon and I were both at DRI, they had given us some space in the library, because the Veyrin collection had been placed in Special Collections. There was this gray period for three or four years, in which Jon and I were down to the university library a fair bit, and Virginia Jacobsen, then Bill Jacobsen's wife, was also there as a volunteer part-time secretary or office manager. Jon would be at DRI in the morning, and then in the afternoon he would come down to the library and play with the Basque collection. I would come down sometimes, too, and read.

We also had a few people coming to read the books, so we were just kind of running the collection ourselves. Jon was handling the books, but we had no librarian. I don't think you could check any books out then, because none of them were cataloged. So, you could come and read, and Virginia would keep an eye on you; it was totally amateurish.

Jon had one office, and Virginia had the other office, and then it was the library collection. That was the program, and that was all the space that we were given. So *none* of this area that we're in now was ours. Those two offices across the hall weren't ours, nor that big office that I had. I didn't have an office at the library at all, even though I was the coordinator. However, I still maintained an office at DRI, and I remained there for the meantime. I think I fairly quickly got the office that I ended up in, but the overall space was very small, and we quickly filled it up, and we had to start storing books at Stead.

At the end of my five year-grant in 1976 I added Tonopah and Australia (to look at the Basque *and* Italian sugarcane cutters) to a request to renew my NIMH grant. By then I knew that some of the Italians that I interviewed in southern Italy had cut sugarcane in North Queensland and so had some Basques from Murélag, so my proposal was a comparative study of the two groups and their adaptations. (I knew they'd all lost their jobs when they mechanized the sugarcane harvest, so I was tying pieces together.) NIMH gave me another five years of funding, so for ten years my salary was paid by NIMH, not by DRI.

Towards the end, probably about the eighth year of funding, 1979-1980, it was real obvious that DRI was going to go in some other directions, and the Basque Studies Program was evolving in a whole series of dimensions, none of which made sense at DRI. By then we had a pedagogical dimension and a library collection. We were doing the study-abroad summer sessions that Jon had started in 1970.

Jon also became increasingly involved with Basque clubs throughout the American West. We'd been in Argentina, and Jon was all charged up and wanted to bring some of the Basque clubs together in order to create something similar to FEVA (Spanish acronym for the Federation of Basque-Argentinean Entities). That's when we hosted a meeting in the Bible Room, which was attended by reps from the Basque clubs of Reno, Boise, and San Francisco. That's when they decided to go forward with a national federation of clubs called NABO (North American Basque Organizations, established in 1974). In addition, I didn't really want to stay at DRI after my grant was over.

By then I was working more for DRI. I wasn't really working that much on Basque stuff, because we'd already done *Amerikanuak: The Basques of the New World* in 1975, and I had also published *Beltran: Basque Sheepman of the American West* in 1979. I had been in Tonopah conducting research for seven or eight months in 1976, and I had also been to North Queensland and done some preliminary research on both Basques and Italians in 1977, so I wanted to go back there again, which I did in 1980. So all of that was going on, while I was still the nominal coordinator of the Basque Studies Program at UNR. The only thing left of the Basque Studies Program at DRI was me, and I was doing a lot of non-Basque stuff.

At that point, we began to lobby for a second position at UNR. Bob Laxalt also helped us again in similar fashion. It wasn't quite as much of a crisis when I transferred down, because I was on that NIMH grant. So we put that into the regular cycle, and then Bob did some lobbying in Carson for that item with the governor, and it went through.

In a way, the university was stuck with me when I came off of my big ten-year grant, because one of the conditions that NIMH put on those grants was that there would be a place for me when I finished the work. NIMH had had some bad experiences where they provided five years of support for a

scholar, and he left his department, essentially, at least as a budget item, for five years. Of course, life goes on, and then there's not a slot for him to come back to. There had been some situations where people had lost their jobs at their universities because they accepted this grant. One of the things that they did on the site visit was that they met with the presidents of both DRI and UNR and got commitments that there'd be a position for me when I got back, even though I didn't have tenure, because you didn't have tenure at DRI at all. They were committed to continuing my position, whatever that meant, because at DRI nobody's position was continued forever.

About 1979 or 1980 by mutual consent we began to work towards the idea that maybe we could get funding in place in the university budget for me to be at UNR, which we did. In fact, we'd transferred my position while I was still on the grant. Then there was a commitment to make it a regular part of the university budget request, so that's how I came to UNR. I went from that grant to a coordinator position in the library. That's probably when they gave me that office at the library.

It's fair to say that it's real questionable whether we would have gotten our legislative approval for the first professional position, the classified position, and our half-time position with the library later on without Bob's intervention. Anytime we had something going in the legislature, Bob was right on the point. Even though Bob had his own private budget with the University of Nevada Press, he was very generous with his political capital. He was willing to spend some of his capital on the Basque Studies Program. That was Bob's main contribution to the program.

I once went to the Basque Country in Paul Laxalt's place as his proxy for an Air France event. In May of 1969, Air France dedicated a plane called *Le Pays Basque*, because they were going to start a new service from Paris to Biarritz. They wanted Paul Laxalt, who was governor at the time, to go on the inaugural flight trip, and Paul couldn't do it for some reason. Bob called me and said, "I can't go. Paul can't go. Would you go?"

I mean, it wasn't Air France's idea for me to go. It was the Laxalt family's idea. So Jean-Léon Iribarren, then president of the San Francisco Basque Club, Pedro Rachet, a representative of the Basque community in Santiago de Chile, and I went. We were kind of VIPs. There was a little banquet when we got there, and we each said, "Hello," "Good evening," "Pleased to be here,"

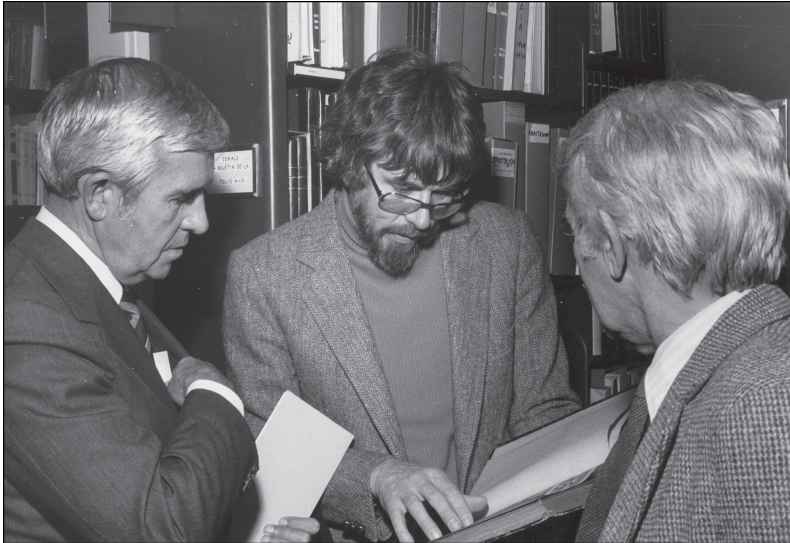
and “Fly Air France.” So we spent about a week over there, and after the banquet we each went our own way. I was able to do some business for our program in the Basque Country thanks to the trip.

I remember when Paul came once, only once, to the program. That was 1983. Paul was a U.S. Senator at that time, and he was on campus for some library event. I forget what the occasion was, but it didn’t have anything to do with Basques.

Bob said, “Paul, if you’re going to be in the library, why don’t we go by the Basque Studies Program?” But Bob couldn’t lead that tour of the Basque Studies Program, because he didn’t come very much either.

The Basque Book Series

Bob Laxalt founded the University of Nevada Press in 1961 and was its director for over two decades. Probably Bob’s one thought in getting involved from the beginning in the idea of a Basque studies program was that the University of Nevada Press



“I remember when Paul came once, only once, to the program. That was 1983.” Senator Paul Laxalt visits the Basque Studies Program. Left to right: Paul Laxalt, Bill Douglass, and Jon Bilbao.

would publish Basque books. I don't know that he thought of it as a series per se, because the University of Nevada Press was very small, but they did have an existing history and political science series, which I believe Wilbur Shepperson was editing at the time. The series as a concept was already established at the University of Nevada Press, so there was a bit of a precedent.

At the time Bob and I met, the University of Nevada Press was a tiny, infant effort. I doubt if the entire backlist of the University of Nevada Press, then, was twenty volumes, maybe not even that. Its entire publication schedule each year was one or two books. The University of Nevada Press was struggling to get off the ground, and Bob was the main force behind that.

Bob and I used to meet all the time, and we became very close friends. I would always walk across campus to the University of Nevada Press to talk in his office. Then we would go to lunch often—maybe once a month. I would tell him what we were up to, but frankly, we'd talk more about the University of Nevada Press than we did about the program, unless there was something heated up over here.

Bob was very focused on the idea of starting a Basque book series within the University of Nevada Press. That was Bob's main interest, and he wanted me to edit it. When we'd get together, we'd talk about how we should start this series. His interest in the Basque Studies Program didn't really go much beyond that. Interestingly, he almost never came to the Basque Studies Program. I mean, I'll bet Bob probably set foot in the program five times in his life, while having an office right across campus.

Of course, the issue was, "What would the Basque Book Series be? What would it consist of?" Obviously it was going to be a series of books in English, and at the time there weren't very many books in English about Basques. I mean, there was *just* a handful. There was, of course, Bob's book, *Sweet Promised Land*, but it was out of print by then, and there was talk about another edition by his main commercial publisher.

Right from the beginning I was telling Bob that, if I was going to edit the series, I'd really like to see *Sweet Promised Land*, but Bob's literary agent had no interest whatsoever in publishing it with the University of Nevada Press, or with any other university press for that matter. I think that for literary agents university presses are kind of graveyards. That's not the way they do it if they want

to make money on a book. Plus, Bob was very ambivalent about that, because he was the author and the director of the University of Nevada Press.

But Bob said, "I'm going to write another Basque book for the series, and I've already told my agent that."

So that was going to be his contribution to the series. We thought that the series should consist of Basque classics, sort of like this *clásicos* [classics] that historian Gregorio "Goio" Monreal, Basque philologist Pello Salaburu, and myself are working on now for the Center for Basque Studies.

The initial idea, when the series was established in 1968, was to publish the translations of Julio Caro Baroja's book, *Los Vascos*. I entered in a negotiation with Caro, who I knew well, and he agreed. However, I was young, and I insisted that he had to revise the book, because the book had been first published in 1949. Caro was working on other things, and he really didn't want to revise it. He just wanted to leave it and have it be treated as a classic. I was ambivalent about that, because a lot had happened since 1949. Of course, it was still Franco's time, so I guess it's questionable just what kind of a revision he could have done, except that he'd published a whole lot of stuff about the Basques since his first book as a very young man. I just thought it would have made sense for him to revisit *Los Vascos*. At first he agreed, but then he found it kind of overwhelming.

I can really appreciate that. Before *Amerikanuak* came out again in 2005, people talked to me about revising it, but I had no stomach whatsoever for going back and revising it. I wrote a short preface and said, "*Ahí está*," you know, "There it is." Caro did that basically with me, and I just said, "Well, I don't think so."

By then we had purchased the Philippe Veyrin collection, and we were in contact with Veyrin's widow, so another prime candidate was *Les Basques* by Veyrin. Then, of course, there was Rodney Gallop's *A Book of the Basques*. Gallop's book had been out of print for God knows how long. We got in touch with Gallop's original publisher, Macmillan, and they were really pleased as punch to sell us the rights, because they had no plans to bring it out again. I think they thought they'd died and gone to heaven, because once we published it we never heard from them. So we agreed to give them some percentage, which also provided a royalty for Gallop's widow.

My thought originally was that the first three publications in the Basque Book Series would be Gallop, which was originally in English, and the translations of *Los Vascos* and *Les Basques*. Those would be three real classic overviews. It made sense to start with Gallop, because clearly it was going to take less work to put in print than the other two, which were both going to be translation projects. At the time we had no experience with translation and all of the sorrows more than the joys of translating into English, and we've certainly become experts and veterans of that war. And it is a war, but it's always an adventure. We were pretty naïve at the time, and the only thing we *did* understand was that it was going to take awhile to get those two books translated, and so if we wanted to launch the series, we should start with *A Book of the Basques*.

Funding the series At the time, the University of Nevada Press had a very, very conservative financial officer, Ken Robbins, who would refuse to let the University of Nevada Press ever go deficit or take any chances. His idea was that you published a book, you put it in the marketplace, and you sat around and waited for the money to come back from that book. Then when you had enough money saved up, you published another book. Well, that is about as conservative as it gets within the publishing game. Of course, the University of Nevada Press's growth was very stunted by that whole philosophy, so the Press was having trouble getting out one or two books a year, as there was no money in the can.

Robbins kept saying, "No. We're not ready yet. We don't have the money to publish *A Book of the Basques*."

Plus, even as a tiny press, they had a big backlist of other commitments that they hadn't met. They were swamped with stuff that they were one way or another planning to publish, but because of this very, very slow publishing process and this fiscal brake on it, they were getting further and further behind. In a way, Gallop was in competition with everything else over at the University of Nevada Press, and it didn't come out for a least a year after we had its rights. It was getting to be very frustrating.

At some point I sat down with Bob, and I said, "Tell you what. Why don't we make a deal? The deal will be that we'll set up something called the Basque Book Series Fund within the

University of Nevada Press, and the deal will be that we'll lend you the money for Gallop."

We had some discretionary funds. We probably had \$10,000 or \$15,000 in the bank altogether after a year and a half from that fundraising that I did. Then, we had \$2,000 left from Molly Knudtsen's \$6,000 donation, because the library picked up part of the Veyrin collection tab. (Originally there were two or three installment payments. I think they paid Veyrin's widow some money down, and then they were supposed to pay her some more after the books got here.) When it came down to the last installment payment of \$2,000, Dave Heron said, "Don't worry about it. I've got some extra money in my budget this year that I haven't spent. I'll just cover it out of the library budget."

So, we put in \$3,500 to cover the costs for Gallop, and then I said, "Basque Studies will fund all Basque books in the future. The way we'll do that is we'll have this formula: the University of Nevada Press will get 65 percent of the profits from the sale of Basque books, and this fund, owned by the Basque Studies Program, will get 35 percent of the profits. We will pay production costs for future titles out of the Basque Book Series Fund, but until the fund is large enough to cover all production costs of books of a year, you, the University of Nevada Press, will front that money as a loan to the Basque Book Series Fund."

In other words, let's say that there is \$10,000 starting the year in the Basque Book Series Fund, which built up from the original \$3,500 by accumulating the 35 percent of the profits from the sale of Basque books, and that year we spent \$15,000 on two new titles. At that point, the Basque Book Series Fund not only was empty, but it owed \$5,000 to the University of Nevada Press, because the University of Nevada Press had put in the extra money to pay the cost of the publications for that year. Now, say, there were five titles out by then in the market, plus, the two new ones that we had just published.

The two new books had pretty big sales—a lot of money was coming in from them—but a little bit of money was coming in from sales from the backlist. The way it worked was, during that year the first \$5,000 in sales of Basque books went straight to the University of Nevada Press to pay the loan, and the next \$10,000 got booked back to bring the Basque Book Series Fund back to where it was at the beginning of the year. The Basque

Book Series Fund leant all of its money to production, and the University of Nevada Press leant \$5,000 to production to get to the \$15,000 in theory, and it was only in theory, because the University of Nevada Press never put the money in the bank, and that caused some problems later. It's like the U.S. Social Security system, where the government spends the money, and they put an IOU [I Owe You] into the bank.

Now, we're back to zero. The University of Nevada Press has been paid, and we've been paid. Let's say that the sales that year were \$30,000 of all the Basque books put together. What happened was, \$5,000 went to the University of Nevada Press, the next \$10,000 went to restore the principle value of the fund, and then out of the last \$15,000, the University of Nevada Press got 65 percent. In other words, they got two-thirds, and we got one-third. This math is a little bit different. Let's say that, at the end of the year, the value of the Basque Book Series Fund went from \$10,000 to slightly over \$15,000, because it was 35 percent of \$15,000. That would be the new number going into the next year, and then we'd look at the production schedule. Maybe that year the production costs were \$20,000, so we'd pull the plug on all of the money, and all of that \$15,000 went to the \$20,000 initially, and then the University of Nevada Press had to lend us another \$5,000 that year.

That's the way the Basque Book Series Fund worked for a lot of years. For the first twenty years of its existence the fund never really turned a profit in any given year, even though the Basque book sales were going up and up and up, because we published more books, and we were covering the entire cost, so the cost of any publication was charged against the fund.

By the early 1990s the Basque Book Series had reached the point where the book value of the fund was growing too quickly. Probably the last really big, big hit for us in terms of production cost was Linda White and Gorka Aulestia's dictionaries [*Basque-English Dictionary*, 1989, *English-Basque Dictionary*, 1990, and *Basque-English English-Basque Dictionary*, 1992]. Those were huge and expensive to produce. We had to front a lot of money, and publishing the dictionaries wiped out the Basque Book Series Fund, when it was up to \$50,000 in value. It took a couple of years to get back on our feet financially. As it turned out, they were also hugely successful, much more than I ever thought they would be because they were unique, and we got the money back.

All of a sudden, the worth of the Basque Book Series Fund was starting to go through the roof. It was probably about 1993 or 1994 when then director of the University of Nevada Press, Tom Radko, called me up one day, and he said, "Bill, I'm really concerned about this, because the University of Nevada Press has never really funded that money, but it's a liability on our books. So auditors looking at it treat it as a debt, and we owe this money, and then the auditors say, 'Well, where's the money?' and we don't have the money in a bank account. It's a big liability, and it's growing quickly, and we've got to do something about it." I think when he and I met, the book value of the series was \$72,000, and it had gone up by \$20,000 that year alone.

(At the end of February I received a report once a year, about the previous year's activity. They would do all of the bookwork, and they'd close the books on December 31 on the series, but then it would take them a couple of months to clean up the end of the year accounts, because they also would charge back a bunch of expenses—even some promotional expenses. Sometimes they were charged against the series, and sometimes they'd pay for part of them. I mean, we always had deals like that. We'd put a flyer out, and they might pay for part of it, but they might charge the rest of it to the series.)

Radko was very concerned, and he said, "This is getting out of control, and clearly, there's no need to have a bunch of money lying around supposedly dedicated to Basque books."

We agreed to do two things. We decided to always maintain \$60,000 as the benchmark for the fund. (That was generous, because normally in a year we weren't spending \$60,000 on production, *but* you never knew. I mean, we were starting to get into some translations, and we were running up some pretty hefty translation costs.) And we decided that every year when the report came out, if the value of the fund was over \$60,000, they would write us a check for the difference. So Radko wrote the Basque Studies Program a check for \$12,000 the first year.

The other thing Radko was going to do was to set the other \$60,000 aside in a real account, if he could, because the University of Nevada Press was always having financial crises. It's not as though the University of Nevada Press has ever been way ahead of the curve in terms of its finances, but he was going to try. There would actually be some money there, so it wouldn't be an

unfunded liability, in effect, from the University of Nevada Press's standpoint.

This new agreement didn't change a thing in relation to the original one. It's just that we kind of added to it, as our original agreement did not call for a payout. The original agreement was kind of open-ended, and I guess we should have had in the original agreement some similar provision. But what was clear was that the Basque Studies Program owned the Basque Book Series Fund, plus it owned a third of the inventory of the backlist in the warehouse, because we had paid for 100 percent of the publications.

It got to be a huge asset. At one point I calculated that just the books in the warehouse were worth \$200,000. Plus they owed us cash, and we had partial proprietorship of the books. [In 2006, however, the University of Nevada Press paid off its cash debt to the Center for Basque Studies and assumed total control of the Basque Book Series.]

A Book of the Basques; the news-letter Finally we got Gallop's book out, which became the first Basque Book Series publication. I worked closely with Bob on that; we illustrated the first edition with the photographs that Joyce, Bob's wife, had taken in the Basque Country when they had gone over on sabbatical. (They belonged to the Basque Program at the time, but she had some kind of publication rights.) We were kind of involved at several levels, and I wrote a little one-page introduction or preface to the edition. We printed 2,000 copies of the Gallop book, thinking there would a certain demand for it.

Gallop's book sold out in a matter of weeks. We were back reprinting in practically no time at all—in just a matter of weeks. It absolutely blew us away! We had no idea it was going to be that way. *A Book of the Basques* was an enormous success, far beyond what anybody anticipated. Since then, Gallop has been through about at least five editions, and it's still in print. That's about a 10,000-or-more-copy book at this point, and that again is virtually a huge deal in America in university press publishing circles.

I don't have the right numbers, and the University of Nevada Press has lost some of this history. I tried to get some of it at one point for certain negotiating purposes with the University of

Nevada Press, but the recordkeeping got pretty vague going all the way back to 1969. It should have been there, but this goes back to before records were computerized. When the University of Nevada Press began using computers, who knows how much they input or how much they just threw away and started over. It's hard to get a real good profile of how some of those old publications did over the years.

By the time Gallop came out we had a newsletter, which was a real invention. It was my idea, and I thought it up before Jon Bilbao came here. [The Basque Studies Program's newsletter was first printed in November of 1968.] If we were going to develop a program with certain public dimensions such as a library collection, and we were trying to raise funds, it made a lot of sense to have a newsletter. Also, we needed a mailing list for our Basque books.

Beginning in 1967, I was driving around the American West—Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and up into Washington, Oregon—trying to find old Basques, in order to do oral histories and to just kind of get a feel for things. I was really on the road a lot, and some of it was Basque festival related, and some of it wasn't.

Wherever I stayed, I would go through the local phone book to mark every Basque last name. That was even before zip codes, so most phone books, particularly in rural areas, listed addresses. Back in the 1960s most people's addresses were in the phone book, even women's. (Today women don't like to have their addresses in there for obvious reasons.) People didn't worry about it. The idea of having an unlisted phone number or having just your name in the phone book but no address, that's all pretty new—since junk mail started and since society got nastier.

Marking names, of course, was not a perfect system. There were urban areas, especially, in the American West where it was very imperfect. It was flawed. In other words, if you open up a Los Angeles telephone book, which I did, there were probably four pages of Aguirres, and in all of those Aguirres there might be two Basques, because the rest might be descendants of sixteenth-century *conquistadores* from Latin American countries (primarily from Mexico). Those people have no notion of the fact that they're Basque descendants. I mean, somebody might if they got interested in roots and traced their origins, but they would all consider themselves in that sense to be descended from

Spaniards; there's no appreciation of their Basqueness. But, if you go to the Boise telephone book and there were fifteen Aguirres, fourteen of them were Basques.

So in Los Angeles I was very, very selective and really just went after French-Basque names, and there were quite a few. For example, I would take Hiribarren with an *h*, Hirigoyen with an *h*, Etcheverry with a *y*, that kind of thing, because obviously they were French-Basque names, but Iribarren without an *h* was problematic. In Elko or Winnemucca, in all of those sheep districts, virtually every Basque surname that you found in the book was a good one—a good catch—but not in Los Angeles.

I put together initially about 5,000 names by hand, just copying them down, and that was really the core of our newsletter mailing list. So by the time Gallop came out, we maybe had 5,000 or 6,000 names in the list, and these people had already received three issues of the newsletters. I would imagine Gallop was announced in the third issue. But through that vehicle we just—boom!—sold the thing out immediately on mail order. Of course, that newsletter list grew, and now I think it's up pretty close to 10,000 names—roughly twice what I started with.

We probably mailed the first newsletter to 7,000 or 8,000 people, and I think we probably asked people if they didn't want to be on the list to let us know.¹¹ Some people wrote back in and said, "I don't know why you sent me this. I'm not interested in that kind of thing." I'm sure that they were the Aguirres descended from Mexico in Los Angeles.

Also, I asked the Basque clubs to give me their membership names, and for the most part they wouldn't. We didn't have that much credibility. I don't think there was hostility. I can't ever remember flat-out hostility, but there was ambivalence on the part of the officers. The officials of Basque clubs are always pretty nervous, anyway, since they're subject to a lot of criticism and under a lot of scrutiny. They don't like to take chances, particularly with things like the mailing list. We might have received one or two club mailing lists as part of that first effort but not much. There was no NABO yet, and there was no Basque government. So, the whole *Asuntos Exteriores* [the Basque government's External Affairs Department] didn't exist.

The newsletter has always been done twice a year, but I can't remember whether in the earliest years we might have missed one or two issues. I was its editor for almost thirty years. Eloy

Placer edited one or two editions when I was in Italy doing fieldwork from 1972 to 1973.¹² Then later on I think Linda White from the Center for Basque Studies edited it for a while, and now Jill Berner composes and edits it. [Jill is currently the promotional and publicity staff for the Center for Basque Studies.]

The book series takes off As we started to move forward, Bob got me involved with the University of Nevada Press, not just as the series editor of the Basque Book Series, but also as a member of the editorial board of the University of Nevada Press in 1970. It was about the same time that the first edition of *A Book of the Basques* came out. When I first came to Reno, Bob didn't put me on the editorial board right away, because he didn't know me professionally. But as he began to get more respect for my ability to edit and waited for my opinion along those lines, then it was kind of a natural progression.

Also Bob and I ended up in a kind of professional relationship, because Bob would give me his manuscripts—he was writing a lot of things—and I'd do a little bit of editing sometimes, and he'd respect it. We'd sometimes talk about whatever he was working on, and he kind of liked to bounce ideas off of me. Bob very open about that. He didn't always take my advice, which he shouldn't have, but basically, he used me as kind of a sounding board.

When I went off the University Press Board, I had been on it longer than anybody else at that point. Wilbur Shepperson had been on there longer than I had, but he was off by then. [Bill was a member of the University of Nevada Press since 1970 and a member of its Executive Committee until his retirement in 1999.]

Given the success of the Gallop effort, we immediately moved away from the idea of translations. We would have published a revised edition of *Los Vascos*, but we knew that in asking Caro to revise it, by the time he did so and gave us a new manuscript and we translated it, it would have taken years. So that couldn't be our second publication, and it was clear that we probably ought to do something different.

Bob's whole involvement with his first Basque Book Series book really came about in response to the success of Gallop and the fact that we didn't have a follow-up manuscript in hand. Bob happened to have *In a Hundred Graves: A Basque Portrait*

completed. That was the book that he had promised us. The book is a series of little vignettes on the Basques based upon the year that I met him over in the Basque Country. Bob told his agent, "I'm going to give this book to the Basque Book Series, so stop showing it around." I think Bob might have even had a contractual obligation to shop that book to his commercial publisher of *Sweet Promised Land*. The publisher took a pass on it, because it was a very different book than *Sweet Promised Land*. So in 1972 *In a Hundred Graves* became our second publication.

Jon Bilbao knew Stanley Payne, from the University of Wisconsin. Payne was a leading historian of Spain and Portugal, and he used to be in touch with Jon over Basque bibliographic matters, because Jon's bibliography wasn't out yet. Jon suggested to Stanley that he might want to consider doing a book on Basque nationalism for our series, and he agreed. I was surprised when he agreed, but he did.

Payne was a very fast worker, and, of course, he had a lot of material. His Basque material was embedded in his broader historiographic treatment of Iberia, but he could pull out fairly easily his interpretation of Basque nationalism, which was, essentially, from a Spanish centralist perspective. In other words, he treated Basque nationalism as a regional, ethnopolitical, or ethnonationalist movement rather than from an independentist perspective. Payne submitted his manuscript, *Basque Nationalism*, and we got it out in 1975.

Meanwhile, I had talked to Jon about doing *Amerikanuak*. I think by then we were starting to get a pretty good idea of the Basque situation in the American West, and I was doing that project in Elko about the Basques when Jon went to work on it with the NIMH grant support. It was real obvious to me that we ought to do a book about Basques in the American West. Eventually, it evolved it into Basques in the New World.

It also became obvious, in looking at Elko, that you couldn't understand why Basques went to Elko and what they did there without understanding why they didn't go to Boise, and why the ones in Boise didn't go to Bakersfield, and ultimately why the ones in Boise and Bakersfield didn't go to Buenos Aires. In other words, the scope just kept opening out, and all of these divisions—Elko town, Elko County, state of Nevada, American West—began to pale in significance when you began studying Basque immigration. It became more and more evident that you

had to look at it as several individual Basque diasporas in relation to the homeland. We got into this research back in the late 1960s and early 1970s from a practical standpoint, way before diasporic studies became popular. It just became evident that we had to keep expanding our purview.

The other thing that became evident was that there was an awful lot of “Basque” history masked under Spanish history in Latin America. All you had to do was scratch the surface a little bit, and you could reinterpret a lot of Latin American history with Basque spectacles. That got us into a whole new interesting area. Basically, we decided that *Amerikanuak* was going to be a real important deal. By the time we finished researching and writing *Amerikanuak* it was 1975.

I, by the way, had published my MA thesis, *Death in Murélaga*, with the University of Washington Press in Seattle in 1969. Somehow the Washington Press heard that I was working on *Amerikanuak*, and they wanted to publish it. The director, Don Ellegood, got in touch with me, and he said, “Bill, if you’ll submit up here, I will nominate your book for something called the Sick Award.”



Bill Douglass in Florence, Italy, 1973. Photograph taken for publicity for the publication of *Muerte en Murélaga*, first edition, by the publishing house Barral.

There was a family named Sick in the Pacific Northwest that was wealthy, and they had endowed a kind of literary award at the University of Washington. Ellegood thought there was an excellent chance it would win this prestigious award, which entailed a little bit of money. It was some kind of a prize—then they also brought you to Washington to give a distinguished lecture on the campus, and they published the book in a deluxe edition.

It was tempting, but I said, “No. It’s *really* the reason we started the Basque Studies Program here, and so it’s committed to the series I edit.” *Amerikanuak* was the fourth publication in the Basque Book Series.

By the way, Jon Bilbao and I, when we published *Amerikanuak*, we donated our royalties to the Basque Book Series Fund. When we did that, Bob changed his contract on *In a Hundred Graves* and donated that book’s royalty. So for a while there was another source of income for the Basque Book Series Fund—not a huge source of money, a few hundred dollars every six months from each of the sources. We were building the thing up.

So we’ve got Gallop, Laxalt, Payne, and *Amerikanuak*. But then we had a big hiatus. There were a lot of problems at the University of Nevada Press, and they were having trouble meeting their commitments. They were essentially out of money. The University of Nevada Press had a huge project on its plate called the *Doten Diaries*, and it was under a lot of pressure to get the multi-volume out. It was very expensive, and it took them a lot of years. Ken Robbins wasn’t about to spend money on Basque books. Even though in theory we had money in our Basque Book Series Fund, there was no money in reality for the next title.

In thinking of setting the Basque series up in the first place, I had some thoughts in mind. One regarded all of this work that I was putting in, because I was spending at least 25 percent of my time on this series, uncompensated by the University of Nevada Press. I would acquire, edit, copyedit and, in some cases, even translate manuscripts. I had all kinds of adventures.

We went all the way from 1975 until 1979 before the fifth publication came out, which was my book on Beltran Paris. In part it was an easy, short, simple, and very inexpensive book for them to bring out as opposed to, say, *Amerikanuak* or some of the other things we might have done.

In 1979 the Basque Book Series took off again. In 1980 we published Bob Clark's *The Basques: The Franco Years and Beyond* and Gustav Henningsen's *The Witches' Advocate*, which I had worked on for fifteen years. I recruited Henningsen in Julio Caro Baroja's house, where I met him in 1969 or 1970, during a trip to the Basque Country. He was working on Basque witchcraft, and he wanted to edit the Spanish inquisitor Alonso de Salazar's report on witchcraft as well as write a thirty-page introduction to it. Well, before it was over, *The Witches' Advocate* was a 500-page book with no Salazar documents, and I went through that whole process with Henningsen. In fact, I even flew to Copenhagen and spent some time working on and editing it, as there were some issues with his English. He's Danish and speaks very good English, but it's one thing to speak good English and another to be able to write perfect English for publication purposes.

Then Rachel Bard submitted *Navarra, the Durable Kingdom*, which was published in 1982. I worked with Dorothy Legarreta for several years as well, and she produced her book, *The Guernica Generation*, in 1985. Then Richard Lane and I, in 1985, submitted the photo book, *Basque Shepherders of the American West*. At that point, the series was pretty well established. Also, it was about then that Bob Laxalt left the University of Nevada Press.

I had *always* been after *Sweet Promised Land*, but Bob's agent kept saying, "Well, we're going to bring it out."

His agent was shopping it around in New York, and there were all of these possibilities that didn't happen. Bob and I had been talking about it for fifteen years, and it hadn't come out.

I kept saying, "It's the fundamental literary text of Basques in the American West. It's everybody's story, and it needs to come out."

Bob's ambivalence about publishing his work in the University of Nevada Press was waning, and I kept saying to him, "Look, it's not your idea, it's mine, and I'll take full responsibility for the idea. I'm the one that's trying to talk you into it. You're not trying to talk me, the series editor, into your book. It's the opposite."

So little by little his objections eroded, but his agent's defenses didn't erode, and he didn't want to give it up. Finally, I convinced Bob, and Bob told his agent he was going to submit it, so we published it in 1986. Again, I don't know how many editions it's gone through, but I'm sure it's sold 10,000 copies or more in the

University of Nevada Press editions. That was another huge success. By then the series was very successful. The power, the strength, or the force within the series was becoming pretty strong.

We never really got back to the idea of doing translations for translation's sake. The idea of doing *Los Vascos* proved sterile, because Caro Baroja wouldn't budge, and I wouldn't budge. Further, we never really seriously went after *Les Basques*, because it became obvious that the series was capable of attracting original scholarship. In fact, at first I used to go out and chase authors a little bit. I mean, if I knew somebody was doing a dissertation, because they came through here, and if I felt the topic was of interest to us, I might say, "Look, have you thought about rewriting your dissertation as a book and submitting it here?" We got a few things that way.

Some of the books took years and years and years. Jim Jacob's book on French Basque nationalism, *Hills of Conflict: Basque Nationalism in France*, was a problem. It took fifteen years. With both of Jacob's and Henningsen's books I kind of gave up at a certain point. I thought they'd never happen. It had been fifteen years, without constant effort but rather periodic revisiting of the subject without being confident that the authors were going to ultimately produce a book. We were also getting a lot of stuff across the transom, as they say, being submitted—books by Clark, Bard, Legarreta, Renato Barahona with his *Vizcaya on the Eve of Carlism*, and Cyrus Zirakzadeh's *A Rebellious People*.

We went after Jesús María Lasagabaster's *Contemporary Basque Fiction: An Anthology*, which came out in 1990. That was our first real foray into a translation project, because we thought that we needed a book on Basque literature. So we talked to Lasagabaster, and he had a published anthology already. That was the first time that we went out and translated a book virtually from scratch.

Bob wrote the *Basque Family Trilogy* [*Child of the Holy Ghost*, 1992, *The Basque Hotel*, 1993, and *The Governor's Mansion*, 1994]. Again, Bob sort of shopped it around commercially through his agent, and the agent was unsuccessful in placing it. Bob had a lot less patience with his agent over the trilogy, because he'd been down the same path with another book he'd written, which isn't about Basques. It's set in Dayton and with rattlesnakes—*A Man in the Wheatfield*. There had been some aborted movie deals that didn't happen, so Bob was getting a

little more cynical or skeptical about representation from his agent and from others.

By then Bob was very pleased with the response to the Basque Book Series' edition of *Sweet Promised Land*, and he was making money off of it, so he was also pleased with that. Then Bob basically just dug in his heels with his agent and said, "I'm going to publish the trilogy in the Basque Book Series." We did all three books.

Cookbooks and travel guides Just for fiscal or financial reasons university presses have evolved over time in a direction of having to offer more works with popular appeal rather than academic originality. The marketer at the University of Nevada Press kept saying to me all the time, "We've got to do a cookbook. We've got to do a cookbook."

The elitist in me was frankly appalled at the idea of publishing a cookbook. Then one day the marketer came to me, and she showed me how Harvard had just published a cookbook on New England cuisine. That spiked my gun. I no longer had an academic argument. If Harvard was doing cookbooks, why couldn't Nevada?

So we translated and published José María Busca Isusi's book, *Traditional Basque Cooking*, in 1993. He was famous in the Basque Country, and Jon Bilbao suggested it, but I'm sorry to say we should have done a different book. It was a lousy cookbook to publish. It's got some recipes and all, but it's really a book about Basque food and ingredients, which is not a cookbook. That's probably, in part, my fault, too, because given the fact it's not a cookbook, it was easier for me to agree to publish it with some recipes at the end. It's almost a "study," [laughter] so I guess it assuaged my academic conscience to say, "If we're going to do a cookbook, we'll do a book about cooking."

The cookbook sales were great, but I think that there were a lot of disappointed buyers, too, because they thought they were getting a cookbook, and they got this very stilted book about seafood in the Basque Country and stuff like that. But, of course, in 2001 we got another cookbook out, Mary Ancho Davis' *Chorizos in an Iron Skillet*. My guess is that it's done real well, because Sara Vélez Mallea was very interested in that one. She pushed that one real hard.¹³ In 1998, we published our first guidebook, *A Travel Guide to Basque America*, by Nancy Zubiri,

which had big sales. [The second edition came out in 2006.] So at the University of Nevada Press there was this sort of pressure building, too, to not just do academic books.

For example, Mark Kurlansky's *The Basque History of the World* is a book that I would have resisted publishing. I reviewed that book for the *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos* [*International Journal of Basque Studies*]. I basically gave it a favorable review but with an asterisk, saying that its importance is not its originality. Kurlansky has a pleasing writing style, and he's a good writer. He's assimilated a bunch of material, and he tells a story cleverly, but from a Basque scholar's standpoint, there's absolutely *nothing* in this book of interest, nothing that's new. It's just kind of a *refrito* [a refry]. It's a rehash.

I don't think that the book is full of egregious errors, but it's a quaint kind of book, and it's a book written from a particular point of view. That's fine, because it's a point of view that doesn't get much support or much advocacy. Even within Basque circles it's a very controversial view, but it's a viewpoint that is virtually unrepresented certainly in the Anglo world. In that sense I think Kurlansky's book was really an interesting exercise, and I'm glad he did it.

What Kurlansky did was he attracted, to the Basques, the world's attention in a way that our whole Basque Book Series never has. One could say in a sense that if you're trying to popularize and trying to reach the broadest possible audience, Kurlansky's book is more successful than the entire Basque Book Series put together in terms of its impact. Having said that, I still wouldn't have recruited that book for the series. Joseba Zulaika, then director of the Center for Basque Studies, looked at it more carefully, and he asked me to look at it in manuscript form, so I did. Zulaika knew Kurlansky somehow, or maybe Kurlansky knew of us and got in touch with Zulaika, but he wasn't submitting here. He just wanted Zulaika to look at it, and I think he acknowledges that in the preface or somewhere.

The Occasional Papers Series Another thing that happened was that we started our Occasional Papers Series at the Basque Studies Program, which was not part of the Basque Book Series. There were two policies at the University of Nevada Press that made it difficult for us to publish certain works. One policy was that they would not publish

literature, novels, or poetry. They were inundated with poetry submissions, because the world's full of people who write poetry and want to get it published. So a lot of university presses won't even look at poetry, in part because they're afraid to open that Pandora's box. The University of Nevada Press and a lot of presses wouldn't do novels—fiction—for the same reason.

Sweet Promised Land would have been somewhere on the cusp, because some people think of it as a novel. I don't. I think it's a travel account, a long essay . . . a lot of things, but I don't think it's a novel. But, of course, some of Bob's work, for instance *A Man in the Wheatfield*, is more novelistic. Part of Bob's reticence over the years to consider the Basque Book Series as a potential publisher was the fact that he was a novelist. He thought of himself as a fiction writer, primarily, but he also did other things, too, such as *National Geographic* articles that weren't fiction).

Radko came out of the humanities and immediately set about changing that policy through the University Press Board, which opened new possibilities that didn't exist before.

The other thing that the University of Nevada Press was not interested in initially, like many university presses, was collected essays. Virginia Jacobsen kind of got on my case about that, and she said, "We should have an occasional papers series, which should focus primarily on collected essays, because we know many scholars, and we could give them a theme, or we could even have a conference and publish the proceedings."

So Virginia sold me that idea. There was a publishing precedent within the Basque Studies Program. The precedent was we did hold a conference in honor of Jon Bilbao at DRI, when we were still out at DRI. The proceedings, *Anglo-American Contributions to Basque Studies*, were published by DRI in 1977. (I don't know whether it was signed off as the Center for Western North American Studies, because they changed their name about three times. Later they called themselves the Social Science Center. It might have been the Social Science Center by the time they published that.)

At the time, Jean Decroos had done a sociological dissertation on Basques from San Francisco, but he died prematurely before he could entirely rewrite it as a book. So here we have this "book" that I thought should come out. I thought it was good, but it was very, very technical. It was still a dissertation, and I was

ambivalent about putting it in the Basque Book Series, because it really wasn't a book in that same sense. So I published Decroos's *The Long Journey* in the Occasional Papers Series in 1983, and that's how we launched the series.

I sent letters to people and invited them to submit essays for two different volumes of the Occasional Papers Series—*Basque Politics: A Case Study in Ethnic Nationalism*, published in 1985, and *Essays in Basque Social Anthropology and History*, published in 1989.

Then Barbara Rosen wrote a book about the Basque composer Juan Crisóstomo de Arriaga, and she wanted it to go in the Basque Book Series, but I knew that the University of Nevada Press wouldn't be interested. It wasn't fiction, but they had never done anything on music or about a composer, and I just knew that there would be some resistance to publishing it at the University of Nevada Press. I suggested to her we put it in our series, and she went for it. *Arriaga, the Forgotten Genius* was published in 1989.

Success of the book series One thing that should be remarked is that the sale of Basque books was phenomenal and inexplicable—really weird. The reason I say that is because I used to be asked by directors of other university presses about the Basque Book Series, because it became very emblematic of the University of Nevada Press. It became known for the Basque Book Series, because it was so unique.

Fifteen or twenty years ago, the Basque Book Series was producing roughly a third of the total sales of the University of Nevada Press, and the University of Nevada Press was growing, too. They were publishing in more areas, but we were up over \$100,000, \$125,000, \$130,000 a year in sales at a time when the total sales of the University of Nevada Press were around \$400,000. Just from an internal standpoint, the series was a big economic factor within the University of Nevada Press.

At the time, there were other universities that were trying to play the ethnic game, particularly after the *Roots* phenomenon.¹⁴ There were presses trying to specialize in different groups—Italians, Jewish For instance, Judaica Press, founded in 1963 in New York, has proven to be a pretty good success. There's more than one press that has specialized in Jewish books, because the Jewish reading public is pretty extensive. So there's a pretty

good and bigger market for Judaica than any other ethnically related series of books.

At some point university presses thought that there would be some money to be made in publishing books about ethnic groups, but basically it was not that good. There were two or three attempts by university presses to capitalize on Italian Americans, and there are millions and millions of Italian Americans, but Italian studies bombed. Irish studies, same deal. It's just like all of America's other ethnic groups.

I know that because my Italian book, *Emigration in a South Italian Town: An Anthropological History* (1984), was published by the University of Rutgers Press when they were trying to move into ethnic studies. They simultaneously published three books on Italy by three fairly well-known people, thinking that they would support each other and would establish Rutgers as an Italian-American studies press. Their sales were in the hundreds for each of the titles, and Rutgers moved away from it. I think they brought out 800 copies of my book, and it took them awhile to sell them. I don't think Rutgers publishes on Italians any longer.

Marlie Wasserman, who was the director of Rutgers Press at the time, cornered me at an AAA meeting, and said, "Tell me about the Basque Book Series." She could not believe our history! She asked me to explain to her why it was so successful. Until ten years ago, around 1995, our minimum press run for every title was 2,000 copies, and some books were 5,000. We published 5,000 copies of *Amerikanuak* in the initial press run, which was *unheard of* in American press publishing. We had *enormous* press runs. By then we had enough experience to know that there would be demand, but it took a long time to sell it out.

In those days the standard university press run would be 1,000 to 1,500 copies. Everybody would print more books than they really thought they would need and warehouse them, because the technology was not there to reprint inexpensively. *Today* that's not a problem, because any press can virtually produce fifty books on demand or one book on demand. The technology has made it so warehousing the books is not a big deal. But back then everybody's nightmare or worst fear was that you'd publish a book, and it'd sell out too quickly—the sales would be tailing off, but there was still a demand for it—and you'd sitting there with a book that people still wanted three

years after you brought it out, and you were out of books. It was just about as expensive to bring it out again as to do the original press run. But you're not going to bring out another 1,500, because you can see that, although you've saturated the market pretty well, still and all there's a demand for fifty or a hundred books.

The real art in university publishing, or any kind of publishing, was to estimate how many you were going to need in order to come up with a good estimate, because if you made a bad guess—if you printed 2,000 and sold 400—that would be a huge disaster financially. But it was almost as big a disaster if you published 1,000 and there's still demand for the book, so you're left wondering, "Do we reprint?" You didn't ever want to have to reprint, everything else being equal.

I don't know what it was, and still is, behind the success of the Basque Book Series. I can't explain it to this day. What's even *more* amazing to me is the fact that there are very few Basques in the United States, relatively speaking. Fifty-some thousand people, roughly, identify as Basque, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. There's a certain kind of exotic interest that Basques create or elicit. Certainly here in the American West there's a curiosity about the Basques.

The other thing that kind of boggles my mind is that among those 50,000 people there's not a huge intelligentsia. I had mentioned earlier that Judaica Press does well, because there's a whole sort of Jewish intellectual establishment. There are a lot of people of Jewish descent teaching in universities; there's also a tradition of *going* to university in that ethnic group, and until recently that wasn't true of Basque Americans. Basque-American kids were growing up in Elko and Winnemucca, and there wasn't a big tradition in Elko or Winnemucca for anybody to go to the university. It was almost an anti-intellectual atmosphere, but people were buying the books.

My guess is part of our sales were symbolic, certainly initially. I think the Gallop book, for instance, was purchased by a lot of people that maybe didn't read it, but they just *wanted* the book, so they could lend it to their friends, but I can't document that. Then, other buyers read Gallop because it was highly readable, but many of the other titles were less so. I think the phenomenon of buying a book just to have it was a real factor in the sales of our first ten books. But after that, we had published more books

than casual readers had space for on their library shelf, so they stopped buying them. They only bought the ones they really wanted. The cookbooks and the travel guide always went through the roof, and they had much more popular appeal than our strong academic titles.

I think the Basque Book Series probably represents 80 percent or more of the serious work on Basques in English. I mean, it's had a *huge* impact that way. I would even go so far as to say by now the Basque Book Series constitutes the intellectual patrimony of the Basques of the United States.

When we first started the Basque Studies Program, there was a question throughout the American West, "Who are the Basques?" or, "What's a Basque?"

Nobody understood who Basques were, and now you don't hear those questions much anymore. It's not just because of our efforts, but we certainly contributed to that. If you were a Basque American and your neighbor asked you a question about the Basques, you were stumped. You could give them your opinion, but you couldn't give them something to read. About the best you might be able to do was to give them a copy of *Sweet Promised Land*, but that was certainly not about Basque history or the Basque people per se. It was about Bob Laxalt's father and the immigration experience.

In a way we kind of launched the series as a popularizing effort. It started out with a philosophy similar to Mark Kurlansky's, because *A Book of the Basques*, *Los Vascos*, and *Les Basques* were kind of popular books, in their own way. So you had those kinds of pre-Kurlansky treatments of the Basque Country. They were three overviews with a lot of anecdotes—a chapter on witchcraft and a chapter on some of the exotic stuff, on Juan Sebastián Elcano [first circumnavigator of the world], et cetera.

Then to that we added *Amerikanuak*, which we certainly didn't intend to be a popularized account, per se, but we knew was going to be another overview. *Amerikanuak* was essentially an introduction to a really serious sociological study that never got written about the Basques of Elko County. We sort of thought of *Amerikanuak* as kind of the introduction to that book. The same thing happened to the Basques in Elko County as what happened to Salazar in the Basque Book Series. Salazar's manuscripts have never been published by the Basque Book

Series, but what we did publish was a 500-page introduction to the Salazar manuscript.

In fact, the whole first chapter in *Amerikanuak* is as obvious to a Basque reader in Europe as, say, Kurlansky's book. It's just situating the Basques, everything from prehistory through the last 1,000 years of Basque history in all seven provinces. I would think that somebody in the Basque Country picking up *Amerikanuak* would be just skipping chapter one and going right to chapter two, if they're really interested in the true subject matter of *Amerikanuak*. But you couldn't assume that kind of background information for the Anglo reader, so that's why we provided that. But it's been a successful book.

Life's funny. That was as far as our original thinking went. There's a way in which brick by brick and without any kind of game plan, the series just evolved. I edited the Basque Book Series until I retired, and then I went back to editing it for a year after retirement, because there were some problems with continuity. Then Sandra "Sandy" Ott from the Center for Basque Studies was the editor at some point. [As of April 2007 there is not a member of the Center for Basque Studies who serves as editor of the Basque Book Series.]

The Basque Studies Library

By the time Jon Bilbao got here, the Veyrin collection had arrived and was put into Special Collections, which wasn't terribly accessible. They also placed some books in a display case. I think it's fair to say that of all the people in the library who impinged upon that collection, the Special Collections librarian, Bob Armstrong, was the least enthusiastic. He was real ambivalent, because he really didn't know what to do with those Basque books. (He had a very strange history with the library himself. He disappeared—he just didn't come to work one day, but that was later. He was kind of a strange guy.)

I think Armstrong thought it was sort of a one-time thing. "Now we have this collection, 750 books. That's nice." Special Collections frequently gets that kind of one-shot donation of this, that, or the other thing. He didn't really have a place for the collection. He had less space then for the whole Special Collections than we have today for the center. He had a bunch

of stuff in boxes out at the off-campus storage area in Stead. Armstrong was not thrilled by the idea that this was going to be an active, growing collection. I mean, he was not openly hostile, because he knew that there were some fairly powerful people, including the director of the library, who liked the idea, but initially, we framed the collection as a special collection.

Armstrong wanted to place the books in the general stacks with some rare books possibly up in Special Collections, but Jon and I didn't want that. We resisted merging our books with the general collection and the idea of buying books and sticking them wherever appropriate, sprinkled throughout the general stacks—the history books with history, European history, et cetera.

We were very nervous about that. We thought that the collection would be better served if it stayed together, otherwise, first of all, it would lose its personality. Secondly, one of the big advantages for a user was the capacity to be able to browse, to just go to a general topic area, and all the books were there—not scattered—and they're all Basque. I know myself, in my own research, that I've discovered important items that I would have never found otherwise just by fooling around, browsing in our stacks. So there was a kind of benefit.

We recognized almost immediately we had some interest by people that wanted to come to UNR because of the Basque collection. I remember that historian Richard Etulain was the first person that got a major grant for that. The grant was from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and he came for a year to work in the library in 1973.

Our collection wasn't properly cataloged; our books posed some big problems for the catalogers, and they were already way behind in processing the general collection. One of our fears was that the Basque books would not get cataloged in a timely fashion and that they would be in some room somewhere. We wouldn't know what we had, and we wouldn't have that synergism. Finally, we were able to convince the director of the library that we needed to have our books physically in one place, and the books stayed at Special Collections. So there was that kind of initial tension with Special Collections.

Of course, my thought was that the Veyrin collection was the first brick in a wall, and one of my big priorities was to build on it. One of the things that I *did* understand about having a

Basque program was that without a serious library collection, we would never have a serious effort, so I began lobbying for a budget to continue to buy Basque books.

Back then there were very, very scarce library resources on Basques around the United States. Most major university libraries—Berkeley, Harvard—might have fifteen, twenty, twenty-five items. My own library was as large as or larger than the Veyrin collection at that point, as I used to buy books on my own from Librería Manterola, a bookstore in San Sebastián. At one point I even cross-listed my own Basque collection and brought the books physically to the library and leant them out to people.

We all—particularly those of us close to Basque Studies and certainly somebody like Jon Bilbao, even I—knew that there was a vast world of Basque-related scholarship out there, but it was in various languages, and it was compartmentalized topically or miscataloged, to put it that way, in a lot of strange ways. A lot of Basque stuff was masked under Spanish, French, Latin American, or Philippine histories, so tracing down Basque material was as much an art as a science, and you had to have some proper and special criteria to know how to pursue it. Of course, Jon Bilbao was the world's expert, but I even understood that before we recruited Jon.

Jon became the *de facto* librarian. He was half a librarian, because he understood librarianship and custodianship. He was the main person in advising any user that would come in and finding them material. He was literally hands-on, and he developed some kind of a catalog system. It was a serial thing, and he had a *fichero* [card catalog] for that too. He was always making *ficheros*. He was an inveterate card cataloger, whether it was trying to list Basque vocabulary or whether it was bibliographic entries. He was always surrounded with card catalogs.

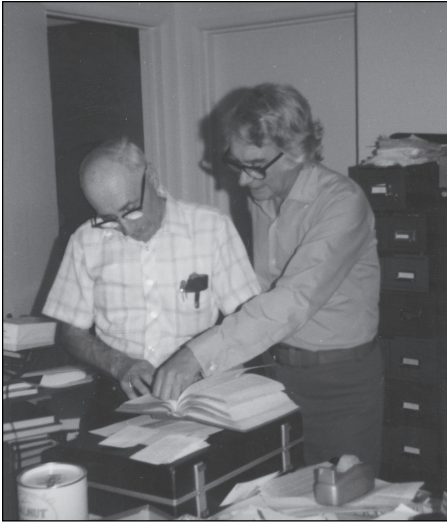
For example, the main reason for Jon to place old or rare books in the Basque collection general shelves was, in part, due to his serial system. If we had 2,843 volumes, the next one that came in was 2,844, so I think there was a way in which he was trapped by his own logic. I don't think that Jon thought it was a great idea to have an original Larramendi book [Basque author Father Manuel Larramendi, 1690-1766] out there so anybody could steal it.



"So tracing down Basque material was as much an art as a science, and you had to have some proper and special criteria to know how to pursue it. Of course, Jon Bilbao was the world's expert." Jon Bilbao demonstrates a traditional Basque instrument called *alboka*—a double hornpipe—at the Basque Studies Library, 1980.

At the time, Armstrong was in on the design of the new Special Collections space, which was going to be all of this area where we—Oral History was here then—Special Collections, and Black Rock Press are now. It was all going to be sort of under Special Collections. When it came time to design our initial quarters, Armstrong allocated us a really small space. In other words, it was the two offices where Kathryn Etcheverria [UNR library employee, 1983-2006] is right now and a bit more where the reference books and the computers are today. That was going to be the whole Basque collection, and there were going to be two offices, and material that didn't fit in there was going to go to Stead. I was real unhappy with that.

At that point, I don't know whether it was the pressure of the remodel and the expansion of Special Collections, but Bob Armstrong disappeared. He didn't give notice, and as far as I know, he just didn't come to work one day. After a few weeks everybody started to get concerned. I don't whether he just got



Visiting scholar Juan Cruz Arrosagaray, (right) with Jon Bilbao at the Basque Studies Library, April 1976.

in his car and drove away from Reno, but he just disappeared. I don't know the full story there, but it was kind of a mystery. I don't think anything happened to him. I think they verified that there was no foul play involved and it was a personal choice. But somehow or other his wheels came off, and he decided he didn't want to work here any longer, and he didn't want to face the process of unwinding, so he just left. Now, maybe there's a whole other story that I'm unaware of, but that was the one that came across to us.

All of a sudden, Ken Carpenter became the Special Collections librarian, and he was in charge of the remodel and the expansion design. They were reorganizing space within the building, and they were going to spend some money on its physical expansion. The library went out a ways. It wasn't a huge expansion, but it was an expansion, and we were designed into it. Fortunately, Ken was a lot more open to the Basque collection idea and to the Basque Studies Program. He was for it. Ken and I sat down, and I said, "Ken, the way our space is designed right now, it is already way too small, without even thinking about accommodating any growth or accommodating visitors. It's just terrible space."

Ken agreed, and that's when he knocked down a couple of walls and brought the collection all the way back to the stairwell. We were physically removed from Special Collections. It's pretty much the way it is today in Getchell Library.

Then Ken said, "We've got this classroom, Bill. It's right next door. That could potentially be space, too, because it's adjacent to the Basque collection. So if you guys expand, maybe down the road, that space could be allocated to you as well." After I moved down from DRI, and probably within a year or two of

that library expansion, I needed to have an office. Ken understood that and gave us that space.

The next room over, which is now storage for the collection, was a classroom; maybe it was a bigger classroom, and they built a wall when we finally needed to take some of that space. I think that might have happened, but I'm not sure. They could have been designed as two different rooms, and they used the other room initially.

*Develop- We had collection development as one of our big
ing the priorities, and, of course, with Jon Bilbao, that was
collection very efficient. The development of the collection
was essentially Jon's work. Jon was the cornerstone.*

I would take very, very little credit for that. I mean, I had something to do with it as I was a facilitator in the sense that I would help get resources for it and stuff like that. But basically it was Jon's initiative and Jon's lead. That was an area in which I totally trusted Jon. Whenever he came and said, "We need X, Y, or Z," as far as the collection went, I never questioned it.

Under Jon, the collection reminded me a lot of regional archives or town libraries that I've used in Europe, where you've got one person who knows where everything in the place is and is totally in love with the collection. Jon loved his books.

Jon was totally generous. I've encountered librarians who were anything but and who treated the public library as essentially their private collection, and they would literally freeze people out. They would have an area of interest that they planned one day to write about, so they'd try and hide it from you. But Jon was the opposite. Jon was delighted if anybody showed up. He had a proprietary sense that the books were all his children, but he wasn't proprietary in the sense that he defined boundaries or tried to keep certain stuff just for himself. No, quite the opposite.

At the time, we had great financial resources for collecting books. The big problem was the benign neglect. The collection suffered mightily from benign neglect. What we didn't have were the human resources to process the books, to catalog them, to run a library, to lend them out, and all of those kinds of things. Our books weren't cataloged for the most part, so it was hard to put the code in. It was hard to check books out to people, because we weren't part of the library cataloging system, so we weren't

on the Library of Congress or the Dewey Decimal systems. Most of our books were just Jon Bilbao's Basque 1, Basque 2, Basque 3, et cetera. We also had logistical issues with space, because we very quickly outgrew our quarters, and we had to send materials to Stead.

We had a great acquisition program in the person of Jon Bilbao. Also, the person in charge of the library budget, Milton Wolf, the acquisition librarian, was very, very favorably disposed to the collection and thought it was the most unique one in the library. So did Harold "Hap" Morehouse, former director of the library, and Steve Zink, current dean of libraries. All of the upper echelons in the library always thought that it was a jewel in the library's crown. It was a big crown jewel, because it was the one thing that we had that nobody else had, and librarians like that kind of thing.

Milton, as the person in charge of acquisitions in the higher levels of the administration, had several functions, including the library's budget—the book budget. He would allocate the book budget to different academic departments around the university. Milton gave us 1 percent of the university library budget, which was disproportionate to other academic departments within the university, because he wanted to stay on top of the Basque collection. The library has been very, very generous with the budget. Ultimately, our budget kept going up over the years [by the mid-1980s, the budget was increased by another 1 percent], and now I think it's about \$70,000 or \$80,000 a year.

Of course, during the late General Francisco Franco years and the years immediately after Franco, we had enough money to essentially have standing orders in the Basque Country for everything that was in Basque or that was about Basques. In other words, we would buy every Basque book. We would even buy books in Basque on physics and stuff like that, which are of less direct value to our mission than a lot of books.

In 1973 Jon managed to get another major collection, which was Basque scholar Ramón Goñi Nagore's private collection. Some bookseller—and I'm not sure which one of those working with Jon—approached us about the Goñi collection deal. Jon looked at it, and he thought, "We've got to buy it." We went to the library administration, and they gave us extra money that year to do it.

Then there was a huge explosion of publications in the Basque Country because of the establishment of Eusko Jaurlaritza [the Basque Autonomous Community Government in Spain] following Franco's death. There was this big exuberance leading to all these publications. It reached the point where we had to become somewhat selective, though not hugely selective, but we had to prioritize what we would buy and what we didn't buy—we probably stopped buying books on physics printed in Basque. For example, in 1998 we got archivist José María Harte de Jáuregui's Spanish Civil War collection, I think, pretty much the same way we got Goñi's books.

We would get offers from booksellers all the time, and some of them got us into unusual situations. For instance, some of the parish books from the church of San Pelayo of Bakio ended up with a bookseller in Bilbao. I don't know whether the parish priest sold them or whether they were stolen and taken there, but material ended up there, and the book dealer in Bilbao offered them along with some other things, some census materials—unique handwritten stuff—to Jon.

Jon bought ten or twelve books from that book dealer mainly to conserve them, to keep them together, because his fear was that people would just tear a page out of the book—tear the entry of their baptismal certificate or their great-great-grandfather's baptism, or they would buy just that page, and then they'd frame it and put it on their wall. And, of course, the records would be destroyed and dispersed. So Jon talked to me about it, and he said, "We need to protect this for the short term, and then we'll see what happens."

Ultimately, in 1999, Marcelino "Marc" Ugalde, then Basque Librarian, gave the material back to the bishop of Bizkaia, who gave us our money back, whatever we paid for them, I think, \$2,000 or something. There were strange things like that.

If we had an opportunity to buy a particularly unique item or collection—little ones, but expensive and really unusual stuff—and we didn't have enough money to buy as much as we wanted just from the mainstream in that year's library budget, every time I ever went to the central administration or to the library administration, they found the money and bought the thing. I give those examples to underscore how well the Basque collection was treated and appreciated from the library standpoint.

Reporting lines Regarding the Basque collection, Jon and I were reporting to Armstrong from the beginning, and that was the price I had to pay for keeping the books from disappearing into the general stacks. So if they were going to be a special collection, then the Special Collections librarian was the custodian. Then Ken Carpenter became the Special Collections librarian, and later the assistant director of the library. They later got Bob Blesse in as the Special Collections librarian, but I continued to report directly—not through Bob Blesse, but to Ken Carpenter.

So there's a way in which, as that happened, without any kind of a formal deal, we ended up following the reporting chain. We followed Carpenter as he moved up, because there'd been pretty much a *de facto* split between the Basque collection and Special Collections, even physically after the redesign of the library.

I would go two or three months without seeing Bob Blesse. I might run into him in the hall, or I might be over in Special Collections on some research related thing, but as far as really just talking about administrative issues, internal politics in the library, or about a minor issue, I'd go talk to the library management—Morehouse, the director, Ken Carpenter, or to Ruth Donovan. They were all very favorably disposed towards the program, but it was a real loose and an informal kind of relationship.

When the Basque Studies Program was transferred to UNR, Morehouse graciously agreed to not just house us but to be our administrative, nominal supervisor. To me it made sense for the Basque Studies Program to be housed in the library because of the collection. Even when I was personally located at DRI, in my capacity of coordinator of the Basque Studies Program, I reported directly to Morehouse. I remember for a while that Morehouse preferred that I spend more time with Ken Carpenter, but I was mainstreamed to him. However, we had already established that loose relationship with the library administrators, and it didn't tighten that much once they became our superiors. We were a real autonomous, stand-alone deal.

We didn't really have a whole lot of interaction with the library, except for every year I had to evaluate the Basque Program staff and Morehouse had to evaluate me. I think when my position at UNR was approved, we got one classified position.

[Virginia Jacobsen was the assistant coordinator of the program between 1974 and 1979.] I supervised Jon and the classified position. Then, we hired Cam Sutherland, who might have been hired for a year or two before Jill Berner came onboard in 1976. Jill was probably our first permanent, full-time, classified employee. (Jill just received an award for thirty years of service as a classified employee.) Then Jill took pregnancy leave in 1981, and we hired Linda White as the departmental secretary, and then Linda became a professional in part through the whole Basque-English dictionary project. Later on Linda got her PhD in our tutorial PhD program.

So about once a year Morehouse and I'd sit down and chat about the whole thing, and he'd say, "Well, tell me what's going on," and I'd kind of update him on what we were up to.

He'd say, "That's nice."

As our supervisor, he just wanted to be kind of up-to-date on any initiatives that might be going on. It was totally painless and totally semiformal at best, if not informal, and he was a very easy person to work with. Ken Carpenter, Ruth Donovan, and Milton Wolf were very supportive.

Also every two years as a coordinator I would have to prepare a budget for the biennial state legislative process, asking for new positions that went nowhere. The budget request would go to Morehouse, and he would forward it, usually with a neutral recommendation. When Morehouse agreed to be our supervisor, he made it very clear that his condition was that we would not enter into competition with his budget. This was a problem for the Basque Studies Program, because it was somewhat inhibiting for its development. So we were kind of a stepchild, and it was fair enough, because that was the agreement coming in.

Morehouse was always very reluctant to let us go out and fight for our budget, and we were not even in UNR's budget. We were in a different budget category called Statewide Programs, and we still are. Statewide Programs is kind of a grab bag of miscellaneous initiatives with no oversight—an elephant's graveyard of programs within the university system. So we were in with the Small Business Center and some cancer research deal. Basically, you were an orphan in Statewide Programs.

But at the same time, you were kind of protected in a way, because Statewide Programs was something that just got sort of

automatically funded each time. However, it was virtually impossible to grow an effort under that rubric, because you didn't have a champion within the budgetary process. In other words, there was no supervisor of Statewide Programs. It was very, very hard to get a new position or any kind of an increase or anything in Statewide Programs.

Structurally my request would go from Morehouse to some UNR budget and finance committee, then to the UNR president and the upper administration, and then to the chancellor, and the chancellor would present the system's entire budget to the regents for their approval, which would inevitably be for at least half as much money as there was any chance of getting. From there it would go to the governor. The governor's people would cut it by more than half again. Finally it would go to the legislature, and the legislature would restore some of it and maybe add a few other little items to the university budget and the entire state budget.

The process in our system is for the governor to present his budget, and then the legislature approves part of it and changes part of it and denies part of it and adds some of their own ideas, because the legislature has the final say on the money. The governor doesn't.

Morehouse, as the director of the library, was fighting for the library budget, but he wasn't about to go to the mat for the Basque Studies Program, which was in this odd category of Statewide Programs. At least initially, and then for about the first ten years that we were here under the library administration, we had virtually no direct support, within the system, to grow our program.

We didn't have a lot of supervision, because Morehouse didn't really understand what we were doing, and I don't think he cared. He trusted me. Any paper that I needed signed, I'd take it down the hall, and he'd sign it without questioning. I can't ever remember once Morehouse saying no to me or second-guessing me. I wasn't down there a lot, but whenever I went down, he assumed that I knew what I was doing, and he'd sign. In a way we were unsupervised and unscrutinized. We just basically did our thing, and in a way, the Oral History Program was in the same boat as us when it was at the library. It was not highly supervised either.

At times there was a little bit of tension—*tension* may not be the right word—but there were some issues with the library faculty and with staff within the library, because *they* didn't really understand us. We weren't librarians, but we were librarians. Technically, we were in the library, my position technically was in the library, and it was this kind of a weird category. I don't know how it is today, but then the library staff was a very democratized organization, and they were always setting up committees and challenging the library administration for this, that, or the other. They also wanted to have all these evaluation processes, and they would evaluate each other, and they would do all of this stuff.

So they didn't know what to do with us, because we were under the same roof in the library but not of the library. It was like we weren't the perfect fit, and so not being the perfect fit, they didn't know whether or not to involve us in the committees. Sometimes they would, and sometimes they wouldn't; sometimes we'd be in for a while, and then we would be out. They didn't know whether to evaluate us or not—some years they might, and other years they might not. There was a little bit of grit in the grease, in the machinery. Nothing huge, but to the extent we had any kind of friction within the library, that was more or less it.

Our first profes- sional librarians We were going along, but, as I said, the biggest problem we had was maintaining the collection. By the time Jon Bilbao went back to the Basque Country in 1982, it was getting away from him. [Jon was awarded the rank of Professor Emeritus Basque Bibliographer upon retirement in 1981.] He would come down and spend a lot of hours in the evening just working on the books and putting them on the shelves and running his primitive cataloging system, but the thing was outstripping his ability to do it that way.

Also, we were getting a bunch of nontraditional material—photographs, postcards, documents, and letters—so it was all of the headaches of that kind of thing, as opposed to a book that has got some pretty narrow parameters and you know what you need to do with it. But for cataloging that other stuff, you've got to make it up kind of as you go along. Maybe there were no

computers then, or if there were, they weren't today's computers, and so there wasn't that whole aid that we now have. Jon was doing it all longhand on cards, on *fichas*. It was very amateurish. So it got to be pretty tough for him.

Then Jon left, and, boy, we tried to stay on top of the collection, but it was just *really* badly getting away from us. The library was outgrowing everybody's capacity to handle it. The collection was becoming unmanageable. Morehouse and I saw that, and we realized that we had to do something about it; we needed a librarian.

We were also beginning to feel that we needed better contacts with booksellers. By then Jon was living in the Basque Country, and all of our books were going through him. He had managed to institutionalize his bibliographic research. He had his own locale and staff, and he was still collecting materials for his *Eusko Bibliographia*. We would buy our books from a bookstore in Vitoria called Linacero, and they would go over to the library Sancho el Sabio, where Jon was processing the books for *Eusko Bibliographia*. Then, they would pack the books and ship them to Reno in those days. We also developed a relationship with a bookseller in Bilbao, and they were sending the books to Vitoria. Then Linacero was sending them on, along with other stuff we were buying from them.

Morehouse also realized that the collection wasn't getting cataloged. We were way, way behind. So Yoshiko "Yoshi" Hendricks [a UNR library employee from 1970 to 1999] became the person in charge of cataloging the Basque books. Yoshi came to UNR from Austin, Texas, because of the Basque collection. She had been in Navarra, and she knew Spanish and some Basque. It was the thing that tipped her over the edge, and she wanted to come here. Ultimately, Yoshi and Virginia had a falling out, and then she stopped coming around the program. But initially, Yoshi was in the Basque Program every day.

Yoshi had some clout in the cataloging area. They were cataloging some of our books, but it was a real ad hoc effort, and it was around the edges, and maybe 100 or 200 books a year were getting cataloged, and we were buying 1,000 by then. So we were getting further and further behind. Books were lying on the floor in little piles. They were not even getting on the shelves, and we limped along. We used student assistants for a year or two, but it became really obvious that the thing was totally out of control, and I talked to Hap.

I said to Hap, "It's your collection. You guys are buying these books. We've bought some of them, I guess, through donations to the program and all, but essentially, they're your books."

It wasn't even clear who owned the books or whose books they were. There had never ever been a meeting at which I sat across from the director of the library and we discussed who owned the books. I don't think that we could have suddenly started packing up the books and walking out the door without hitting trip wires. I'm sure that the library would have said, "Wait a minute. Those are our books. That's our collection." The library always, I think, pretty much assumed that the books were theirs, and I always assumed that they were pretty much their books.

Hap agreed that we should go in together on the biennial request, and he would put part of the library's prestige behind it. That was the first time he was willing to really go to the mat and ask for resources for the Basque collection.

Then we convinced the central administration to allow us to be able to lobby in the legislature for that full-time position. So we went in, and we requested a full-time librarian, with half of the position in the program's budget and half in Morehouse's budget. That was so he would only have to ask for a half-time position. Morehouse didn't have to lobby for it, but he had some problems getting his library staff to agree to it, because by then the library faculty had a lot of input in the budgetary process and what the director of the library would ask for.

Hap finally got the half-time position request through his own staff. I think the people in the library, in fairness, understood the thing was out of control and something had to be done. Yoshi, I'm sure, was very supportive of that, and she was still here, and she was pretty important and had her own power base.

So once again we brought the Laxalt connection to bear. We got that position funded, and we went on a national search and hired María Otero-Boisvert, a Cuban American, as the first professional Basque Studies Librarian. She and her husband came to Reno, and her husband went to work over in Carson City as a lobbyist—a high-placed guy. I think he's an attorney—a very accomplished young man. He was a staffer for the governor or a U.S. senator, maybe Senator Harry Reid.

So María did a good job and got her arms around it. She didn't know Basque, but she was very fluent in Spanish—she was close enough to her Cuban background—and some French,

too, if I'm not mistaken. Her English was fine, because she was born in New York, and so she'd been educated in the U.S. She pretty much got the thing under control, never perfect, but then I don't think anybody has ever got that thing perfect. It's its own little—or big—beast. It's always a work in progress.

Then, María and her husband decided to move to Chicago, and she got a job at Loyola University as the librarian. Her husband maybe had an MA and went back to school to the University of Chicago or Northwestern. It was a personal reason, and I think it was more related to his career than to hers. María was here from 1986 to 1989.

Now we've got the position, but we didn't have a librarian. We went again on a national search, and in 1989 we found a very, very qualified individual, Ellen Brow. She had been the Iberian and Latin American acquisitions librarian for the Harvard University collection. She was impressive, and she spoke Spanish and some Portuguese and had a lot of contacts with booksellers. Ellen had good, longstanding connections in Latin America.

In 1994 we came up with a grant to the federal government that gave us two years of cataloging support.¹⁵ Sheila Milan, a library employee, and Ellen wrote that grant proposal, which was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. We put the



"Ellen had good, longstanding connections in Latin America." The Basque Studies Program faculty and staff at the Basque Library, 1990. Left to right: Jill Berner, Linda White, Bill Douglass, Joan Brick, Ellen Brow, and Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe.

grant proposal in, but Sheila, who was going to be in charge of that cataloging project, left the university before the grant was approved or maybe right afterwards. We were to receive about \$200,000, if I remember correctly.

At one point the library administration was even prepared to resign the grant. It was just a question of logistics. It wasn't that the library was against it, but they were just kind of, "What are we going to do? We've got to perform, and the grant's supposed to start pretty soon."

I said, "That's unacceptable. We can't do that. We can't give away this one opportunity to get 10,000 Basque books cataloged. We've got to pull out the stops and do everything we can to save this."

We helped the library find some students from the Basque Country that could come over and work, and we saved that project; the library was glad, too. Kathryn Etcheverria was appointed to head the project. That's her first real involvement with the collection. We cataloged 10,000 books.

Ellen ran that library from 1989 to 1993. I really don't want to get too deeply into personalities, but it didn't work out. She was very intelligent, very pleasant, but she was pretty disorganized. She got involved in a whole lot of stuff around the library—she was on all the major committees—and she was highly esteemed within the library. But the Basque collection per se wasn't getting a lot of attention, and, I mean, we got to the point where there were books lying on the floor. There were unopened boxes of books, and there were unpaid bills. There were all kinds of problems, and it got worse and worse.

Finally, I got involved when I saw what I saw, and I said, "It's over. We can't continue this way."

It was painful for Ellen, it was painful for me, and it was painful for everybody concerned. She was a lovely lady, and everybody liked her, and I liked her. But it just was not possible. The management of the collection was frightful and even way worse than it had appeared when Jill and I dug into it, sorting through the unanswered correspondence, paying the stale bills, et cetera.

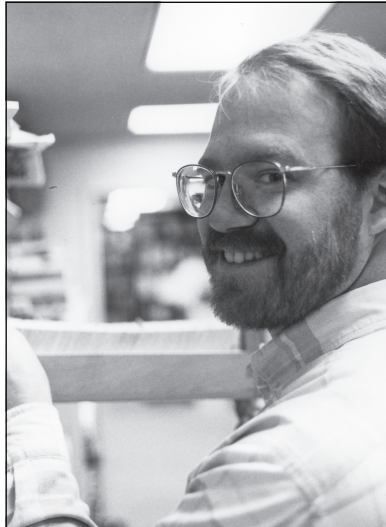
The whole thing caused some other professional grief. Shortly after we terminated Ellen, or actually let her resign, the Library Personnel Committee evaluated everyone as part of the annual evaluation process. As I said, everything was very democratized.

That committee would forward its conclusions to Morehouse, which then became part of his decision regarding the director's recommendations for promotion and merit pay increases. Ellen had an intimate friend on the Personnel Committee, and she argued that I should be censured for my arbitrary and spiteful treatment of Ellen. I guess it was a motion, and it passed.

So when I met with Morehouse to review my performance for the year, he shared with me that criticism. I was stunned and angry. I had never been asked to meet with the committee to face my accuser or address the charge. No one came to ask for my version. I thought it was grossly unfair. Morehouse showed me his recommendation, which was highly positive. I received a merit increase every year of my service at DRI and UNR, and that year was no exception. I thought of protesting, but Morehouse just signed his evaluation. Later I sent a memo for my file, protesting the committee's procedure.

Then we got Marc Ugalde involved. Marc had been a student worker with our program when he was getting his degree in education at UNR. He probably knew the collection, after Ellen, as well or better than anybody, because he had been kind of the key person after Jon Bilbao left, and Marc had been real hands-on. So of anybody around, he was the guy who understood the collection best. Marc was a schoolteacher at Galena High School. That was his first year, and he wasn't that happy. I mean, he didn't like teaching that much.

I talked to him, and I said, "Marc, I know you're not a professional librarian, and here's this professional librarian position. Would you be interested? If you'd be interested, you could get your librarian degree by correspondence. We can't guarantee that you'll get the permanent



"So of anybody around, he was the guy who understood the collection best." Basque Librarian Marc Ugalde at the Basque Library, 1994.

job, but what I will promise you is that we'll support you going to school as much as we can. Would you be willing to come here and be the acting interim librarian while you get your librarian degree? You could meet the minimal standards of the position, as long as you're doing a good job and you're making progress. We'll accommodate it within your schedule and release a little bit of time for you to study. I'll try and keep that position unfilled for you to be able to finish your degree and get certified, so that you would at least be competitive, and you'd have the credential."

We agreed to that. It worked out the way I had suggested that it could, and Marc got his library science degree from Arizona State University—a much respected librarian school and library science program. It took him awhile—three or four years—because he was doing it by correspondence. I think he left for a semester to be in residence down in Arizona.

The position was announced, and he was one of the candidates but with no guarantee of getting it. But, he did get it, and he got it in a fair, free, and open competition. It wasn't wired at all. But once he had his library credential, he obviously had a lot of background in the collection. He knew some Basque, some Spanish, and he was the best candidate in that round. There was a national search and a selection committee. I didn't make that decision, and Steve Zink didn't make it exclusively. I don't think Steve was on that committee, and I don't remember who the members were, but we had people from around the university and at least one other person from the library. After María and Ellen, he was the third "permanent" librarian.¹⁶

Since Jon Bilbao, I think it's fair to say, even with Ellen, that we have not had anyone with comparable, substantive knowledge equal to Jon's, and we may never have that. I don't think that Marc had perfect coverage either, because different scholars who have come through have talked to me about, "Well, you've got this hole. You've got that hole."

I mean, I don't know that anyone, including Jon, was capable of 100 percent perfect coverage. I don't think there's anybody in the library staff today who knows the field of anthropology well enough to develop the anthropology collection without the Anthropology Department, and you can probably say the same about virtually every department on campus. So the Basque collection shouldn't be any different.

One of the biggest challenges we've always had post-Jon Bilbao—and this was true under María, Ellen, Marc, and Kathryn—was the lack of interface with the Basque Country. With Jon, both when he was in Reno and then when he moved back to the Basque Country, there was a wonderful period. I appreciated it at the time, but I didn't realize just what a wonderful thing we had going when Jon Bilbao went back and did *Eusko Bibliographia*, and he brought all the material together in Vitoria physically to be sent to Reno later on.

That was better coverage than when Jon was in Reno and then would go back every year, and he'd go to the bookstores. Basically, that was the closest thing to perfection that we ever had, because Jon even had connections in the Basque government. So ministries that were publishing stuff which was getting distributed very poorly even in the Basque Country would send two copies over to *Eusko Bibliographia*. One would end up in Sancho El Sabio, and the other would come to Reno.

Under all of the successor librarians, only Marc went to the Basque Country twice that I'm aware of. I think María, Ellen, and Kathryn might have been there once. The connections with the worlds of librarianship and also of bookselling in the Basque Country have clunked along. They are not nonexistent, and they are probably 30 percent of what they ought to be. Ideally, one day you would have a situation where you have a person that's really in intimate contact on an ongoing basis with the whole bibliophile world of the Basque Country and other places, too, such as Latin America. But that's a tall order; it's hard to do, and it requires a very special person. It's hard to be on the road a lot, and the resources aren't necessarily there. At least they haven't been devoted yet to allow that to happen quite the way it could or should, and we pay a price.

There's an ad-hocness to the whole thing, and so inevitably you're going to develop holes in the collection, because you're not in that tight relationship. It's easier for things to drop off the radar screen.

There are three or four people that I'm aware of in the Basque Country who are really on top of the current books coming out and also used books and who are really aware of what's happening. But we've got to be in a very tight relationship with those people, and you can't cobble together in ad hoc fashion what those people have, because they go to work every morning,

and they spend all day, every day, working on these issues, and they're right at the vortex. Those are the people we need.

We no longer have a Jon Bilbao; we no longer have a *Eusko Bibliographia* that served as a kind of funnel of material to this collection. For a number of years we had that real luxury. It didn't cost us anything, and it was the most effective coverage we ever had of the Basque books before or after.

I don't know that you could ever get back to that, because it was very ad hoc. It had a whole lot to do with Jon Bilbao, his personality, and with his *Eusko Bibliographia* initiative, and that's all pretty unique. I don't know if something quite as efficient as that even exists in the Basque Country today. I doubt it. Those days are over.

Joining the College of Liberal Arts Right about 1995, I was approached by Ann Ronald, who was the Dean of Arts and Science at the time. Ann always loved our program, and she knew a lot about the Basque Book Series, because she and I were on the University Press Board together for a number of years. She was from the English Department before she became the dean, and we had a good personal relationship. After she became dean she used to kid me, and when she'd see me on campus, she'd say, "I want your program," and I thought she was kidding. Well, one day she said, "I'm serious. I want your program."

I said, "What are we talking about here?"

We had lunch, and Ann said, "I think that you belong in the College of Arts and Science, and I think you would be a great addition rather than being a library program."

I said, "Oh, man! I don't know!" I explained to her that we were really in Statewide Programs, and we weren't a library program. We were based in Getchell Library, but we were a Statewide Program. She already had some background, because she had recruited the Oral History Program, and they were in Statewide Programs with us. It wasn't as though we were totally breaking new ice or breaking the mold or something in administrative terms. There was already a precedent.

I said, "First of all, I'll talk to the staff, and I'll talk to Steve Zink." So I held one of my very infrequent staff meetings.

I almost never had staff meetings. Everybody'll tell you that. I always used to kid people saying I was a "benign Franco." [laughter]



Iban Bilbao, his wife Chantal Egiluz, and their children pose before a portrait of Iban's dad, Jon Bilbao, during a visit to Basque Studies, 1996.

Probably I had fewer staff meetings in thirty-two years than Joseba Zulaika, former Director of Basque Studies, had in six months. Nobody really wanted them. We were really small, and it didn't make a whole lot of difference to have a staff meeting, for instance, between Jon and me, because we had lunch every day together. So basically there was no need, even when we got another position, because it was face-to-face and so intimate. Plus, frankly, people like Aulestia, Bilbao, or Zulaika, in those years, didn't understand the university and didn't want to understand it.

They were from a different world, and they just wanted to

stay very concentrated on their projects; they didn't want to be on committees around the university. It was a very, very foreign world to them, and they just wanted me to go out there and do that stuff for all of us. And it made sense. I kind of understood the way the university worked, and I could do it, and I did so for thirty-odd years. Staff meetings were pretty rare, but then it became less rare towards the end of my tenure. But they were still pretty rare. We'd meet two or three times a year maybe.

I got everybody together and said, "Hey! The Dean of Arts and Science wants us to join. What do you guys think?"

We debated back and forth. We had some teaching commitments in some departments, particularly in Anthropology, History, and Foreign Languages, and we were beginning to develop one with Human Geography. We weren't getting paid extra for it, but we had some bridges to those departments. Also, they were involved in our program through our tutorial PhD program, established in 1984. Political Science, I think, had a passing or an ad hoc interest in us because of Basque nationalism. We had also started the University Studies

Abroad Consortium (USAC) too, in 1982, and certainly Foreign Languages, particularly, was highly benefited by the consortium.

So, anyway, everybody said, "Go for it. Explore it." Our people wanted to go into the College of Arts and Science, because we were in this odd-duck category vis-à-vis all of these departments and all of these disciplines that we were products of. By moving into the College of Arts and Science, we were, in effect, also cleaning up the relationship between the library and the program.

So I sat down with Ann, and I explained to her that we had these informal and really unbalanced, asymmetrical, and essentially unfair relationships with several departments within her college. We were doing things for them, but we weren't really being compensated at all. The fact of the matter is that, if we wanted to teach a course on Basque language, Basque literature, or Basque history, they'd say, "Thank you very much," and schedule a course. But that was it.

They wouldn't budget any of their departmental budget. So it wasn't just in the library that we were excluded from the budget. In our whole teaching dimension the program was excluded from the individual departmental budgets, but they were always perfectly willing to let us teach for nothing. They would then count FTEs [Full Time Equivalent students] as theirs, *but* we weren't generating a lot of FTEs. I mean, we'd get seven or eight students. Oftentimes our courses would have been canceled had they had to justify themselves economically, but because we were doing them "for nothing," in theory, the department and the central administration didn't care.

Ann said, "If you'll come in the college, I will work hard to develop joint appointments between the Basque Program and the relevant departments. I'll try and get a position—half-time Basque Studies and half-time in each of those departments that you work with." That sounded pretty good.

We had had very, very little success in growing the program because of the elephant's graveyard phenomenon that I've talked about—the Statewide Programs thing. It was a very clunky deal, and the idea of having the Dean of Arts and Science for us pushing this agenda, that was another deal.

We went into Arts and Science, and actually, Ann's commitment didn't work out. I think we ran up against a sort of passive resistance within the departments, because each department has its own set of priorities. (I used to go to the old

College of Arts and Science chairs' meeting once a month, and there were sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen of them, and I made it very, very clear who and what we were. Tom King was there with Oral History, too. So Tom and I were heading two programs that were unique—nonpedagogic or nonacademic—and all the rest were teaching departments.)

If Ann wanted to give them a position with some kind of a Basque whatever, the departments would probably have accepted it. But the idea that they would have to take half of a position in their budget and pair it up with a half a position in our budget and go out for a very specific kind of person, they wouldn't want to do it, really, when push came to shove. I didn't encounter hostility, just indifference or maybe passive resistance. So it never happened. That was naïve, but that was the main incentive for us to go into the College of Arts and Science.

Of course, I had to sit down and negotiate our administrative departure from the library with Steve Zink, the head of the library. When Steve Zink took over for Morehouse, nothing changed. They have different personalities, and Steve is a little more hands-on, a little more hierarchical, and a little more administratively oriented than Hap was, but Steve was hugely supportive of the program. He liked it and thought it was great. He had even come to me at one point and talked me into submitting an article on Basques in the U.S. Census to a journal that he was editing on government affairs. That was before Zink became director of the library, today's dean of libraries, so I had a little bit of a relationship with him from that, and he had appreciated it.

Steve was OK with the administrative move. However, we were going to remain physically in the library. But I gave up two things in return for the program continuing to stay in the library as well as for the library to take control of the Basque collection. We would definitively mainstream the Basque collection within the library.

One thing I gave up was the half-time library position, which was, then, transferred to the library budget. In effect, we gave them a half-time position to make up the full-time Basque Librarian, who is now exclusively within the library.

By the time I left, I was no longer evaluating Marc as the Basque Studies Librarian, and Joseba did not evaluate the Basque Librarian, to my knowledge. In the past, María Otero and Ellen Brow reported to me and to Milton Wolf. Milton Wolf and I had

to evaluate them jointly, because half of the position was ours, and half of the position was Milton's. We had this kind of fairly inefficient deal where we had the dual evaluations of the Basque Librarian. Also, the fact that the Basque Librarian was not full-time library faculty meant that it was tugged in two directions, and the collection still had not been mainstreamed as effectively as it probably should have been.

I felt about as confident to evaluate the librarian, by the way, as the library committees feel evaluating, say, Joseba Zulaika and what he does. In other words, it was a little hard for me to give a fair evaluation of the librarian, because I'm not a librarian. Just like it's a little hard for the library staff or faculty to evaluate an anthropologist. It's not impossible, but it's not great.

I understand that librarians probably have a whole set of issues and concerns that are unique to librarianship, such as space. What do you do with duplicates? Do you treat this collection any differently than Special Collections? I mean, if you treat the Basque collection totally differently but as mainstream within the library, I am sure that there are consequences within the library. A person in charge of another division in the library is going to be thinking, "Well, how come they get that kind of special treatment and I don't?" The library structure is a whole world of its own that I personally don't understand that well.

The other thing I gave up was part of my salary. It was obvious that we really needed an assistant librarian as well. In other words, the collection was too big for one full-time librarian, and there was no money. By then I was in the process of going into phased-in early retirement. I was on 80-percent salary, because I had given up 20 percent of my salary and my position to fund Gorka Aulestia's project. When the dictionary was completed by the end of the 1980s and Aulestia went home to Europe, I continued at the 80-percent level, because I was getting more and more involved in the casino business downtown with my family, and I ended up with half ownership of the Riverboat Hotel and Casino. I had some commitments downtown, and I didn't want a full-time position. So we kept that money. It was kind of an annual negotiation with central administration, and every year we kept that .2 position. It became sort of a contingency fund for the program.

When we were making this transition to Arts and Science, the university offered a phased-in early retirement program,

which had certain benefits. I don't think they still have it, it was just a window, but at the time they were going to give you a year of salary if you went as low as half-time. And you'd still earn a full year's credit towards retirement, even if you only worked half-time. It was attractive enough just even from a fiscal standpoint. My salary then was up pretty close to \$100,000 a year, and I was going to go from .8 to .5, and that 30 percent or .3 was \$30,000 in round numbers.

Hap or Steve—that was right about when Steve came on line as director and there was a lot of transition—went to central administration, and they agreed to create a Basque Library assistant position out of that .3, rather than taking it back. Normally, within the system, if you abandon some funding or part of a position, you don't keep it as a department. *De facto* it reverts to central administration, and then they reallocate it. You might be able to go in and talk them out of it, or part of it, for your program or your department or your effort, but it wasn't automatic. So we consolidated the assistant librarian position as part of the move of the program to the College of Arts and Science. That position is now in the library budget, and it was funded by the two former pieces of my salary.

They picked up both half-time positions in return for the idea that the Basque collection would be the UNR library's full responsibility. By then this arrangement of the Basque Studies Program controlling the Basque collection was really a bad idea. It became increasingly evident that there was a big downside to the whole idea of having our own little collection in our own little world. You could have your books, but now you've got 30,000 of them, and we were not spending any of our resources on cataloging them or keeping them up.

For the last five to ten years, before we made that transfer to Arts and Science, it became obvious that our having control over the library collection was a big mistake, because it just meant that the collection was ignored or neglected for the most part. It meant that we had a huge and growing problem in maintaining and stewarding that library properly. It had just gotten way out of control. The library always assumed that the only people that could really grow the collection, that had the expertise to do it, were us. There was always the sense of, "We don't really understand what the Basque Program's doing, but they take care of the collection."

The library would back our decisions, particularly Jon Bilbao's decisions. We all followed Jon's lead for a lot of years until he left. The collection just grew, and the situation just evolved into a loose relationship with the library. By the same token, because the relationship was so loose, we were always down the library's list of priorities. We were never up in the top three priorities. So for better or worse, it seemed to make sense to *give* the collection to the library, and I still believe that it was the right decision.

I had no problem with using my own personal position to help it happen, because I thought it was a very important thing in the evolution of both the program and the library collection. In fact, the library has always chased along behind the collection, trying to catch up. It's never been easy for the library to stay on top of it. Even today with two people and student assistants, it's gotten to be a really big, important, and complex collection.

Because of the schism, the split—and I don't mean schism in the sense of tension but in the sense of administrative division—it is absolutely true that the program lost any kind of administrative control over the collection. I didn't really have any kind of input into the collection afterwards. We mainstreamed the Basque collection within the library framework, and we're no longer under the Special Collections librarian. Technically, the general library acquires and processes the books and cares for them.

So Steve took over the administration of the Basque Library collection, while Ann Ronald assumed the responsibility of being our supervisor. So she would do my annual evaluation, and I would evaluate Joseba and Linda, because by then we had only three—well, two and a half, because I was down to half-time—professional positions.

I reported to Ann, but I would see Steve a lot, because they started to get into the planning for the new library building, the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. The new library building has been in the planning stage for seven years or eight years, maybe longer. They've been talking about it for as long as I can remember, really. But it was getting real serious about 1997.

That's about the time that Ann wanted to physically move the program into the old College of Education building that she was going to inherit as part of that college's move to new quarters. She wanted to put Foreign Languages and Basque Studies and some other international stuff and maybe History in that

building. She wanted to create a kind of international building, and she even wanted our books.

I went to Zink, and he said, "First of all, you're not going to take the books, and, secondly, I don't want the program to leave. The only non-library program that I want to keep is the Basque Studies Program. I want you in The Knowledge Center." So there was a tug-of-war between Zink and Ronald, not bloody, but she had a whole agenda for us, which involved moving in with Foreign Languages.

Steve argued strongly and virtually insisted upon our staying physically with the collection and moving into the new building with the rest of the library. Steve wasn't in a position to stop us from moving as a program, but he was not going to let the books go, and we didn't want to leave the book collection behind. (The center is the *only* non-library function that, I think, is going to be in the Knowledge Center.)

It would be my impression that Steve thinks that the collection is an even more prominent feature of the library if the center is there with the collection and vice versa. The center is enhanced by the library collection, by being in the same space as the collection, and the collection is enhanced by having the Basque scholars and the activities all within the same physical framework.

There are problems—the day-to-day stuff, little frictions between the Center for Basque Studies and the library. There are failures along with successes like anything else in life. But I think on balance it's fair to say—at least it's my perception—that, the library is happy to have the Basque collection and the center. They designed us into the building because they're so proud of the collection, and they wanted the center to stay with the books.

For example, the library is kind of featuring Basque Studies in some ways in the new library building. The space that we're moving into is really prime space. They've even designed exhibit space that really has nothing to do with the library per se, but we're going to have some cases and some places to exhibit artifacts or visual materials.

So it all ties together in Steve's mind. I'm not privy to everything that goes on in this library, but to my knowledge there wasn't any resistance to that idea by the planning committee. I never heard that anybody ever said, "Hey, what is the center moving into the library for? Why is it staying with us? Why don't we leave it behind?"

They could leave us behind, and that, to me, was always an option. One of the possibilities is that the Basque Center could be somewhere else. It doesn't *have* to automatically or necessarily be with the collection. I mean, there's going to be a lot of space available in the Getchell Library. (I don't know that a decision has been made about this building, but there are some issues with it, and I don't know about its future.) To my knowledge nobody ever raised that possibility on the library side. They've always encouraged and assumed that the two would stay together. Most of that, of course, happened on Zulaika's watch after I retired on December 31, 1999.

I believe today it makes more sense for the program or the center as a research effort per se to be in the College of Liberal Arts [which was split from the College of Arts and Science in 2004] rather than in the library, because the library framework was somewhat inhibitive. There were a lot of dimensions of the Basque Studies Program that didn't really fit the library that well. The library wasn't conducting research, at least the way we were conducting research, or implementing courses overseas. But there are also dimensions of the program that don't fit the College of Liberal Arts that well. The Basque Program's kind of a strange animal, and it's got a lot of facets. There's no obviously perfect place for the Basque Program.

Looking forward We're the only academic entity now left in the library. I think it's really important for the center and the library, going forward, to negotiate a very fine, positive, and mutually respectful relationship, because we're going to be sharing the same physical space. We're going to have to cooperate at a lot of levels. I mean, even just things like hours, keeping the doors open, and backing each other up, because, ultimately, we have very little staff, and they have very little staff. Together there's more critical mass to be able to keep the doors open and the lights on.

It's going to be like sharing an apartment with somebody in some ways. If you're going to paint the apartment, you ought to sit down and discuss it with your roommate and not just go buy some paint and paint the apartment, because your roommate might come home and start screaming. So there are a lot of human issues that need to be worked out, and I don't see why they can't be worked out.

There are a lot of reasons why the waters ought to be smooth. But it needs to be negotiated. If there's a perception of problems, I think they need to be discussed openly and frankly in a spirit of trying to improve a situation that maybe needs improvement, whatever that happens to be.

If the center and the library ever get to the point that they're not talking to each other, it's going to be a miserable circumstance for both sides. It would be like having a roommate that you don't even talk to in your apartment. Given the way it's going to work in the future, it would be a lose-lose situation for everybody concerned.

I also think that it's probably important for the center to have a little bit of input into the collection philosophy and user policies, because after all, a lot of the users—not center staff—are nevertheless coming through the framework of the center. When we're providing grants for the people in Europe or for any scholar to come to Reno, clearly we shouldn't be creating problems for them. I think the goal should always be that the patron, both our patron and the library's patron, should receive the very best possible treatment and service and have the very best possible experience for choosing to come to Reno. If they have a bad experience, because either the library or the center lets them down, it's going to reflect on both of us.

The fact of the matter is that every department on campus participates in the development of the general library collection, and usually certain key individuals within departments participate a lot more than their colleagues. I mean some of their colleagues are professors who have never walked across campus and come into the library. They've either got their own books, or they work online.

A particular faculty member who's library oriented can have an enormous impact on the development of a collection by coming over and filling out cards and requests and saying, "Well, we need this. We need that. We need the other thing." Somebody's got to do it, and you get these odd individuals sprinkled throughout the campus who have a lot more influence on collection development than their colleagues. They are active, and they get in the face of the library staff, particularly the acquisitions person. Those people get way more attention, and ultimately their agenda gets met.

For instance, Milton Wolf used to try and get departments to have a designated departmental representative that he could talk to in order to help him in, say, developing the anthropology collection. Now, that was one framework, and it probably still exists. It seems to me that it would make sense in our case to have a library representative on the center staff who interfaces with the library on issues of collection development. I mean, it would seem to me to make sense. I don't know if that exists right now. That might be a real important thing.

There's always a give-and-take between the development of the library and the faculty of the entire university. One can make the argument that it should be even more so in terms of the relationship between Basque Studies and the library regarding the development of a very specialized collection. The fact of the matter is that the staff here possesses the specialized knowledge to develop it more so than do the librarians. I would say that that has always been true. Maybe it won't always be true. Maybe there'll be a librarian in the future that knows more about the world of Basque books. Maybe there'll be another Jon Bilbao. With Jon Bilbao, we had the world expert, and there weren't any Basque libraries either, because we're talking about Franco's time for the most part.

Basque instruction at home and abroad

One of the things that Jon Bilbao wanted was for us to sponsor students going to the Basque Country. So we started a summer program effort in the town of Ustaritz, over in the French-Basque area.

I was a little ambivalent about the idea of a summer program. It was one of those things where Jon was the throttle and I was the brake. Jon thought we should be doing that, and I was always ambivalent about that kind of public service stuff, and again that gets into my academic elitism. But there were just the two of us, and I thought we could only do so much. I mean, I was already doing the newsletter, and I knew that was taking some time, although not a huge amount. (I would write it in a day or two, but you had to gather the information and whatever, and it was a service thing more than research. It wasn't the kind of publication and writing that I was hoping that we would produce.)

We were at DRI at the time, and, of course, we had to run the summer program through the Continuing Education Department of UNR. It really was not a DRI-compatible activity, and Jon and I were under a lot of pressure to just survive with grants. It was taking time away from our grant writing, our research, and our writing for publication. I was ambivalent about that tradeoff, but Jon really wanted to do it, and I didn't say no. I did some of the things for that program because I was the administrator, so I had to deal with the airlines and the travel agents more than Jon at the time. But I did it.

The summer program was a big adventure for us, because in those days you had to get, initially, a minimum of thirty-five passengers to get a charter deal on an airplane. It was a little bit like book publishing. You had to decide how many copies you were going to print. Well, in those days if you wanted to take a group to Europe, for instance, you couldn't just go buy individual tickets and take twelve people, because the tickets were \$2,000 apiece if they each went by themselves. The airlines had group rates, but you had to guarantee x number of people.

The first year we tried to take a group to Ustaritz, we panicked because we only had about thirty people by the time of the deadline when we had to put the money down. So we cancelled, and then in the next two weeks we had about five or six more applications, and we were sorry to have cancelled, but it was too late.

We were able to keep some of those people in reserve, so the next year we did the first program in Ustaritz. [The Basque Studies Program ran five summer sessions abroad from 1970 to 1981.]

That first year Jon led the summer program and taught a little history. Musician and Basque teacher Yon Oñatibia taught Basque for us, and he also taught dancing and played the *txistu* [flute]; everybody loved him.¹⁷ I went and got Caro Baroja in his home, Itzea, and brought him over, and he gave a lecture, and I took him back home. Jon also invited some political people from different points of view to come in and talk: PNV [the Basque Nationalist Party in its Spanish acronym] types, ETA [the Basque Country and Freedom in its Basque acronym], et cetera.

We kind of opened it up in the evenings for people to present any point of view. In fact, I think he even put out an invitation to Falange [a Spanish fascist party]. Different groups came in and took advantage of that, and they just talked to the kids. I



The first Basque Studies Program Summer Sessions Abroad staff in Landagoien, Ustaritz, 1970. Left to right: Eloy Placer, Bill Douglass, unidentified, Yon Oñatibia, and Jon Bilbao.

taught the Old World Basque culture class for a little while, because I wasn't there the whole summer. Eloy Placer also went and taught literature. The four of us—Oñatibia, Placer, Jon, and myself—were the instructors the first year.

Eloy Placer was from Álava, and he was kind of an expatriate like Jon. I don't think he had as much political baggage, but I think he wanted to get out of Franco's Spain, and he came to the United States. He was a Spanish instructor at several universities. I knew about him through the Foreign Languages Department. He was, then, in Lafayette, Louisiana. When we started the Basque Studies Program, the Foreign Languages Department said to us, "We would like our next hire, if possible, to be Basque or to have some kind of Basque dimension."

So the Foreign Languages Department hired a guy named Juan "Maguna" (Magunagoicoechea was his full name), who was an ex-priest, as a mainstream Spanish instructor in the Spanish Department.¹⁸ He interfaced with us at some kind of a personal



"Eloy Placer was . . . kind of an expatriate like Jon. I don't think he had as much political baggage, but I think he wanted out of Franco's Spain."
Eloy Placer (left) and Bill Douglass on the bus to Ustaritz during the 1970 summer session.

level, but he was pretty hostile to Basque nationalism. I think he was out of a Carlist [traditionalist pro-Franco] family from Gernika. I'm not 100 percent sure, but I think so. In a lot of ways he certainly was a Spanish nationalist. I mean, that would be my categorization of Juan. But it's not as though we got into big fights or anything.

Maguna used to hang out with us. It was a social thing for him to come over and talk to Jon Bilbao, primarily, and me, too. In fact, Jon used to complain about it, because he would just sit across the table from him and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, while Jon would be working.

Maguna didn't take any Basque initiatives that I can

recall. I mean, he wasn't interested in teaching Basque literature. He didn't have any publications to my knowledge that had anything to do with Basque. Essentially he didn't really do anything Basque. We were just in the infancy of the program, and he really wasn't the liaison with us that Foreign Languages wanted. Maguna never came up with an idea. He never said, you know, "I could do this," or whatever.

So he got off on a whole bunch of personal stuff, and I'm not even sure what it all was, but he decided to leave Reno. He went to work for the U.S. Army's Language School in Monterey, California. (They've got this *big* language school down there with all different kinds of world languages—I mean, even some very exotic ones.) But, I think Maguna was not even a fluent Basque speaker. He was like Jon Bilbao in the sense that he came out of that generation where it was very hard to learn Basque in the Basque Country, and it was a deprecated language.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Languages Department recruited a guy named Eugene Grotegut. Grotegut was a German specialist, and he was actually, like myself, a native Nevadan, and he wanted to come back to Nevada. Grotegut had been at the University of Kentucky and had met Eloy and had become very close friends. Then Grotegut had gone somewhere else. I don't think he came here from Kentucky, but I could be wrong. I think Grotegut maybe was at a Canadian university, but they brought him in to be the departmental chairman. They were having difficulties in the department, and they wanted to bring in an outside chairman, and he had a lot of good academic credentials.

Grotegut got very interested in this little, baby Basque Studies Program, because it was tiny. I'm talking maybe 1969, 1970 or something like that. He said to me, "I want to replace Maguna with a Basque specialist. There's this person, Eloy Placer. He's excellent, and I would love to bring him here for these reasons."¹⁹

Eloy had written a book, *Lo Vasco en Pío Baroja*, and that was probably his dissertation. Eloy was again a non-speaker of Basque, but he was a *Bascophile*—a linguist. Eloy and his wife, Amparo, came to Reno, and he had some grown children that stayed down in Louisiana, because they'd been in Louisiana for several years by then. I forget how many—maybe two boys and two girls. I'm a little vague about this.

Eloy definitely rolled up his sleeves, and as I said, he went to Ustaritz with us on the first summer session program and taught Basque literature. Of course, he couldn't handle *euskaldun* [Basque-language] literature, but he did Unamuno and other works, but from a Basque perspective.

Eloy was very, very sympathetic to the Basque Studies Program. He loved the idea. He was willing to do anything. He would come over a lot. He even gave us some books to put in the collection. I forget how many, but he had a little private collection. He was totally positive, and he and Amparo were very much part of our tight social circle. Eloy died of a massive heart attack and just dropped dead, so it was a *big* tragedy. Then Grotegut said, "We're going to replace Eloy with a Basque specialist," but that never happened.

I don't know whatever happened in his department, but there wasn't anybody available who was fluent in Basque. I remember Grotegut asked me specifically for some recommendations, and

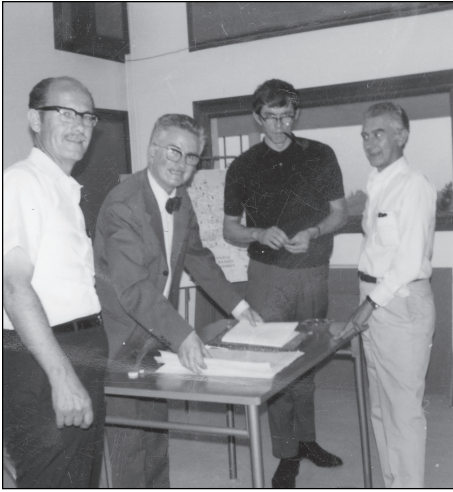
we didn't know anybody. We couldn't come up with a candidate, so he had to fill the position. I'm sure within his department there were various opinions about who they ought to hire and the directions they should go, particularly for the Spanish section. They're always pulled between Latin America and Iberia, Golden Age versus Noventayocho [1898 generation], and all of that. So to cover with four, five, six, or seven people the whole spectrum of Spanish literature at large, as Hispanic literature, is pretty tough. So anyway, Grotegut was never able to make good on that particular promise.

We wanted to do the first summer program outside of Spain, and we wanted to hold it in Iparralde, in part because we wanted to talk about politics, and it was Franco's times. We started in Ustaritz, because of Basque scholar Eugène Goyheneche, who lived there. Jon talked to him about needing a place to hold the program, and he said, "Well, why not Landagoien?"

The municipality of Ustaritz owned a self-contained, little convention facility, called Landagoien, and you could rent it. It's got sleeping rooms and *aulas* [meeting rooms]. It sits on a hill up above the town of Ustaritz. Somehow or other the University of Pau was a little bit involved with Landagoien, but I'm not sure just how. I think Goyheneche and his wife negotiated it for Jon, and it worked. So we went there for two or three years.

Probably in the first year, I'm going to guess, the students were about two-thirds Basque Americans and about a third Americans from all over the American West. I think over time the Basque-American presence which attended the program has gone down percentage wise. I think the students were very excited to be there, and the program was quite structured. They had to sit in class every day, and we were ambitious. We didn't have a whole lot of contact with the local community in Ustaritz. It's not as isolated as Arantzazu, but it's like Arantzazu, because it's up on a hill. It wasn't too far to walk into town, but we didn't have a huge impact on it. You could walk down there, but it was a kilometer or more, so our students weren't just circulating every night in the bars or something.

We did a very memorable summer program in 1972 in which we partnered up with the Office of Higher Education in the state of Idaho. They got a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to foster Basque studies in the state of Idaho. David



The first Basque Studies Program Summer Session Abroad at Ustaritz, 1970. Left to right: Eloy Placer, Julio Caro Baroja, Bill Douglass, and Jon Bilbao.

Grover, who was the head of that department, got in touch with me and wanted me to be a consultant in writing a grant proposal, and I agreed. (By then our Basque Studies Program was getting to be a little bit established. We were publishing the Basque Book Series, and we had a grant, and we were doing the research in Elko and doing work on *Amerikanuak*. And we had run at least one of our first programs in Ustaritz.)

Grover was also working with Basques in Boise—Pete Cenarrusa [Secretary of State of Idaho from 1967 to 2002], Ramon “Ray” Echevarria, who was a very young Catholic priest and teaching a Basque culture class at Pocatello University, professor Pat Bieter, who was teaching at Boise State University, and John Sita, who was a linguist at the University of Idaho in Moscow. He was kind of a wild man. He was from Georgia in the Soviet Union. He was interested in Basque linguistics, and he had gotten Idaho to buy Basque books. They had 1,000 books. I think eventually they might have even sold them to us or sent them here. I can’t remember.

Finally, they wrote this very eclectic kind of grant. It was going to do a little of this, a little of that. Some of it was very publicly oriented. I mean, they were going to send the Oinkari Basque dance group from Boise around the state and probably do some oral histories. It was not a highly integrated, focused thing. It was a bunch of activities under one tent.

Grover asked me what I thought they could do, and I said, “Well, we’ve got this program we’re running in Europe, and wouldn’t it be interesting if maybe we could feature a special

graduate-level Basque linguistics seminar and try to encourage some graduate students around the world to get interested in Basque as a linguistic phenomenon?"

I got in touch with Basque-language linguists Koldo Mitxelena, Rudy de Rijk from Holland, and Bill Jacobsen, and they agreed in principle, if we got the money, to be the instructors of a seminar on Basque linguistics. So we wrote this into the grant, and it was a \$12,000 item out of about \$40,000. We're talking about 1971, and that was a lot of money, compared to today. The idea was that we were going to give a \$1,000 scholarship to each of ten candidates that would attend.

The grant got funded, and we advertised the seminar around the world. In fact, we got one student from Argentina, maybe one from Europe, a couple from Harvard, and one from Berkeley. Anyway, we had all these great candidates.

Then I met with people up in Idaho, and actually things got a little dicey, because once they had the money in hand, there were some second thoughts about spending that much of the grant on this idea, but they were pretty much locked into that. But then there got to be a couple of issues of who was going to go. We wanted this national-international competition to identify the best candidates, and they wanted Sita and I think one other person out of Idaho that really wasn't going to get a grant on a merit.

That got to be a bit of a hassle, and Bill Jacobsen and I were organizing the thing from Reno, and we refused to go along with that compromise. Eventually, the Office of Higher Education up there provided additional funding for a couple of the Idaho people to go. I think we went from ten to twelve that way.

Anyway, we went to the Basque Country and ran that seminar at the Arantzazu monastery in Oñati, which is a nice and spectacular place. We thought that would be a real good place, because it was all self-contained, and there were very few distractions. There are lodgings, and you can rent them from the *frailes* [friars]. I think it was through local historian Iñaki Zumalde that we went to Oñati. I *know* that Zumalde was very involved in the negotiation regarding a Franciscan monastery down in the town where Boise State subsequently held its first year-long program. The linguistic seminar was kind of its own program within the larger summer school program.

It was a very important program, because that year several key people attended. I think that it's fair to say that those summers in Ustaritz and in Oñati had a big impact on the Basque-American community, particularly up in Boise, because some of its key players over the next thirty years were students from those programs, which really changed their lives.

Carmelo Urza, today's director of the University Study Abroad Consortium (USAC), went. Then Carmelo would come back to Reno and would get his MA in Spanish at UNR, but with a Basque thesis, in part because he'd gone on that program. Miren Rementeria Artiach, who until a short time ago was Pete Cenarrusa's secretary and key aide, went. Julio Bilbao, a Basque American who was subsequently quite active in the Basque community in Boise, and Ray Echevarria also came along. It was a very impactful program.

Actually, Cenarrusa's big involvement with Basque affairs resulted from that first little Ustaritz initiative, because his son Joe went on our Ustaritz program and came back to Boise all charged up about it. I think Joe was their only son, and he talked his parents into going over to the Basque Country. Pete was a Basque American, and he was proud of his heritage, but he had never been to the Basque Country. Pete went over with Joe, and he came back all fired up and incensed and very politicized. Pete, throughout his career, was always very, very pro-Basque, maybe even in favor of Basque independence, and he took a lot of stands throughout the rest of his career. But he had never even been to the Basque Country until Joe went on our little Ustaritz initiative and fell in love with the place and came back.

Jon Bilbao had that vision, and he thought that a summer program would be a big, big impact just in terms of maintaining Basque culture in the American West, and he was absolutely right. But I was ambivalent about whether that was our role, the role of an academic department. I wasn't against it. I just didn't know if it was our role, because in my mind it was more like the role of a Basque club, even, or a role for a NABO, which didn't exist at the time.

For me as an anthropologist, the really appropriate role was to study Basques and study Basque identity main-tenance—Basques were my "subject," if you will, rather than my object. I wasn't supposed to create my subject or maintain my subject; I

was supposed to try and understand my subject. I wrote two articles about the history of the program²⁰, where I talked about the ambivalence that I felt about crossing the line between the objective investigator, if there is such a thing—and one can make an argument that there's no such thing as scientific objectivity, if you will—versus crossing the line and becoming a fomenter or, in other words, creating the thing that you're going to study.

Anthropologists are used to a kind of messiness regarding this issue in the sense that anthropological interviewing might happen in bars or wherever it happens and is face-to-face. It's a lot less structured along those lines than is your average sociologist who would think that you totally contaminated your whole field, your whole subject of study, by having a program that sends out newsletters and publishes books and provides part of the cultural legacy for the very phenomenon that you purport to be studying. Sociologists would generally be appalled at all of that, versus anthropology, which is a little messier.

Jon, of course, had no ambivalence whatsoever about getting involved, because his intellectual interests were in things like the language and Basque prehistory. Jon's career, indeed all of his life, had been about preserving Basque culture, whether he was fighting in the Basque Army during the Spanish Civil War or whether he was with José Antonio de Aguirre [the first Basque government president, 1936-1960] in New York City, around the United Nations, as part of the Basque government-in-exile, or whether he went to Boise as Aguirre's appointed representative.

Ramón De La Sota, then head of the Basque delegation in the U.S., sent Jon to Boise as a missionary to essentially find out what remained of Basque national consciousness there and also to try and raise it. Jon had a terrible time in Boise, and it was a very unpleasant experience for him, because there was a whole lot of indifference, particularly about Basque politics. Most of the Basques in Boise weren't interested.

He left Boise and went to Berkeley to begin doctoral work, in part because he felt, I think, pretty disappointed in what he'd found in Boise and probably disappointed in his own efforts. I'm sure he was a little embarrassed that he wasn't able to produce more, but he always stayed very involved in Basque nationalist affairs. [Jon pursued his doctoral studies at Columbia University

from 1940 to 1942, but he never completed the degree. In 1995 the University of the Basque Country awarded him an honorary doctorate posthumously.]

Founding Jon wanted to continue that whole study-abroad
USAC effort. But then, Pat Bieter from Boise State University jumped in, and he wanted to run a year-round program, so he recruited Jon at some point—if not the first year, then the second—to help him for a year. They were having some problems getting that off the ground and also in terms of negotiating deals, and they wanted to set the program up in Oñati. At that point I said, “Jon, we were having enough trouble just recruiting enough students for our summer program. I don’t think we should compete with Boise. I mean, let’s forget it. If Boise State’s going to run their deal up there, let them do it. More power to them. Why duplicate the effort?”

That’s when Jon got a little bit involved with Bieter. Jon was very instrumental in helping Pat set that up. Jon had the contacts in Oñati, and that actually got to be somewhat controversial, because there was a bomb threat from ETA. Some people in ETA thought Jon was with the CIA. It was then that Jon took a leave of absence from Reno for either a semester or a year, and that’s where he met his second wife, Gayle Slavin, who was an older student on the Oñati program. She wasn’t a kid. [They got married in Reno in 1985.]

Bieter also hired Carmelo Urza to be the director of the Boise program for a year. Carmelo by then was married to Nikki Laxalt and had gone to Iowa for his PhD, and he was teaching at the University of Richmond. Somewhere in there, maybe before he went to Richmond, he took a year off and became the director of the Boise State program in Oñati.

Pat finally set up Boise State’s Oñati yearlong program in 1974. Then Bieter started having trouble finding students, because they only were recruiting from Boise State, and also I think Pat Bieter got tired of it. It was a big effort, and it was a lot of commitment on his part, and I think he just kind of burned out a little bit. Bieter couldn’t find a replacement, and I think he just basically said, “That’s enough.” So Boise State dropped its Basque abroad program after three or four or five years.

So for a year or two there was nothing, and then I called Pat and said, "Look, Pat, why don't we partner up? You guys did all that on your own," and they did. I mean, they really didn't want other universities involved. Pat thought he could maintain it as a Boise State thing because of the relatively large Basque population in Idaho, but it was very relative. I mean, we're talking about 5,000 or 6,000 people in all. But he thought he could do his program as a stand alone. I said, "Pat, why don't we see if we can get the Idaho universities and the Nevada universities together. We could approach Idaho and Idaho State, you're at Boise State, and I could approach UNLV. If we can get enough people and we can get this thing established, then maybe what we could do is to hire a full-time person to run it. Then you won't have to do it."

Pat said, "OK. Good idea. But let's just keep it to Boise State and Reno, because most of the Idaho Basque interest is here in Boise." So we didn't approach Pocatello or Moscow at the time.

I went to the Foreign Languages Department, and I approached Grotegut, and I said, "This is what we're thinking of doing, and this could be very important for your department. Also, we want to approach UNLV," which we did.

Grotegut really liked the idea, and we went to the central administration to see Joe Crowley, then president of UNR.

Pat was going to deliver Boise, and UNLV had also agreed. We had decided we'd put \$5,000 each up as seed money to do the advertising, the preliminary stuff, and we also needed a director and went for it. Pat was willing to put up \$5,000, but Pat couldn't get his administration to come up with the money. I believe the private Fereday Foundation in Boise did so. The Basque Studies Program here put up the \$5,000 for UNLV out of our little bit of discretionary monies. (I can't remember whether we ever got it back.) So UNR came up with two-thirds of the money, and half of that money came out of our program. That's how it started.

We had three universities, and we launched the study abroad program. We approached Carmelo Urza, because he'd had that experience in Oñati, and I asked him if he'd be interested. Carmelo was teaching at Richmond, and I don't think he liked teaching that much. He liked the idea, and he wanted to move back west. He agreed in principle that if the idea floated, if we

had enough wind under the wings by such and such a date (when he had to make up his mind whether to renew his contract, probably by the spring), that then we would talk again.

I forget exactly how we promoted the academic yearlong program at first. I mean, I'm sure we did it through our newsletter in part. So we got enough interest, and I think Pat recruited some people up in Boise. [A total of thirty-one students from eight states went that first year, 1983-1984.] Carmelo agreed to come out. By then we had the tuitions coming in, and we had factored in his position to run it, and it was going to be in Donostia-San Sebastián.

Then we hired Sandy Ott as the first field or on-site director of the first USAC program [called University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium until 1988 or 1989]. Sandy had studied at Oxford University, and she'd finished her PhD, but I don't think she had a job. She was doing some fieldwork in the Basque Country, some kind of postdoc.

Jon Bilbao and I negotiated the location for the program with Goio Monreal, then *rector* or chancellor of the Basque University system, at the kitchen table of his in-laws' *caserío* [farm] in Ea and signed the deal on the back of a napkin or something. Then Goio said, "Well, there's no space." However, Goio agreed to give Sandy his Donostia office when he wasn't there and didn't need it. Then we've got one classroom.

The Basque University was up and running, and it was under Goio from 1981 to 1985. I thought that Goio was the first until Alfonso Pérez-Agote told me on my trip with him last year—2004—that Goio was actually the second *rector*, but he was kind of the first real or important one, the first guy to have a whole agenda and to get some things done. Goio was the one who laid the groundwork, even though technically he was the second one. [The first chancellor was Ramon Martin Mateo.]

Alfonso said, "He was a friend of mine, and actually he got me back into good graces." Alfonso was on the outs politically and was ostracized, and this guy had been his mentor or something when he was getting his dissertation. So he put Alfonso back into the good graces of the system, and he opened the door for Alfonso. But he didn't last very long as president.

Anyway, there was *no* space at all. We were going to hold the program in Donostia, which had a very underdeveloped university campus located on a hill in Zorroaga, and they had

very few buildings at the time. They had this old building up on a hill that had been something else. It wasn't built as a university. The campus wasn't downtown where the main campus is today. Back then the campus was either under construction or not even started yet. Eventually, the program moved down to new facilities.

I remember one of the big crises that first year was that the Basque students all went on strike, and we had to meet American standards back here regarding class contract hours. We tried to stay out of harm's way, so we continued to hold classes. We had these American universities' requirements, and we had these kids from various American universities, and if they observed the strike and didn't study, their whole year would have been useless to them. Had the universities back here found out, they'd have said to these students, "If you didn't have enough contract hours, we're not giving you credit." So we were in a real bind on that one. The students met their classes very quietly, and they continued their program.

Because of the strike, the university was closed most of the time, and we had to purchase books. That first year Sandy ran the library out of the boot of her car. She had the books in the trunk of her car. The books were in English—because most of these kids didn't know enough Spanish and certainly not enough Basque to do their assignments with that kind of literature. So we had most of the published stuff in English about the Basques, and she carried that around in the back of her car. So she'd check out books to the students from her trunk, physically.

When you think of where the consortium is today, I don't know—dozens of countries and dozens of universities involved from this end, millions and millions of dollars of budget, thousands of people moving around the planet, and hundreds of employees. When you think how the whole thing began, with Carmelo back in Reno scrambling to try to get enough kids to sign up for the second year so he'd still have a job, really, because if he didn't get enough kids, he didn't have a job. [laughter] And Sandy over there in Donostia, trying to keep the wheels on, facing strikes, and borrowing Goio's office and running a library out of the trunk of her car. I mean, that was the beginning of USAC. It was pretty ironic—a real-wing-and-a-prayer operation. Now it's the second largest international studies abroad consortium in America.

Developing the Basque studies minor I need to underscore the fact that when we were with DRI, it not only did not encourage teaching, it discouraged it, because it got in the way of the research mission of the institute, and it was a research institute. Some of the faculty staff at DRI used to insist upon teaching as a part of their mission, and they would come down to UNR and try, depending on their academic department, to negotiate something, and that's exactly what happened with me.

The first semester I was in Reno, I taught basically half-time in the Anthropology Department, uncompensated, and that was another reason that DRI had a problem with it. Then I taught an Old World Basque culture class, a class on European peasant society, a class on contemporary Latin America, a course on kinship structure, social organization, and a course on anthropological theory. So in other words, I taught broadly and outside the framework of Basque studies per se. That went on for two or three years initially.

I insisted upon teaching, because I didn't know whether the Basque Studies Program was going to last, and I was pretty nervous personally about taking a job to develop a program that might or might not succeed. Maybe I'd spend two or three years after getting my doctorate, and then I would be back looking for a job as a teaching academic, and I would have no experience teaching. I was nervous about that, and I wanted to get the teaching experience. We got involved with the research in Elko and for *Amerikanuak*, and I got pretty busy, so I cut way back on my teaching.

I guess after about those first three years, I never did teach again, except the Basque Culture class, which I taught several times in Elko, sometimes in Winnemucca on the road, and also here in Reno, periodically every four or five years, something like that. So I had a really truncated, if you will, teaching or pedagogical career. However, in the late 1990s I team-taught a European Peasants course with Marie Boutté, a UNR anthropologist, and Joseba Zulaika. By the same token, I gave many more public lectures than most of my colleagues. I was often invited to talk about Basques and Basque Americans. The invitations ranged from grammar school classes to service clubs, and I never refused. I also gave papers regularly at academic

meetings, at times more than one in a given year. I also lectured at other universities such as Cornell, Brown, Utah, New Mexico, Barcelona, London, et cetera.

Along comes Jon Bilbao, and Jon had a different philosophy, really. Jon was also interested in pedagogy, whether we were doing it over in the Basque Country and taking Basque Americans with us, or here. Jon had a strong interest in the program providing a cultural backbone, if you will, to the Basque-American experience, because the Basque-American experience was *very* under-developed at that time. There were no publications, to speak of, and certainly no courses.

Jon taught the Basque language class, and the first year was a huge success, and then the enrollment tailed way off. Then Jon moved away from trying to teach the language as he struggled with that course.

We had stopped teaching the language until Gorka Aulestia came to Reno. I'm not so sure whether Gorka taught Basque for us a semester or two. Gorka also, I think, taught a course on Basque literature. Then Linda White came to work for the program and soon started learning Basque, because she became involved in the dictionary project with Gorka. Linda thought we should teach Basque or offer it, and this was before, I think, she even had her PhD, but she was motivated to teach the language. Then as Linda's research evolved—her dissertation topic was in the area of Basque literature—she wanted to teach in that area as well. By then Gorka had left, and Linda sort of picked up the baton, if you will, of both the language and literature at that time.

Then Joxe Mallea came to UNR as a graduate student in our PhD program. I think maybe even before he had his doctorate, but not way before, he proposed teaching a Basque history class for the History Department, and the History Department agreed to that. Jon Bilbao at least once taught a Basque history class, but it wasn't an annual offering or anything like that, and it hadn't been offered for years when Joxe did it again.

I was always ambivalent about getting too involved as a program on the teaching side, but we always had a little bit going. We were a lot more faithful to our DRI research origins, even after we had moved down to UNR. I always emphasized that we were special on campus. Most UNR departments are primarily teaching, and we weren't, and Oral History wasn't, and some of the other things in Statewide Programs weren't.

In other words, I went with our origins. I've talked about the downside of being in Statewide Programs. Well, the upside is that it's not an instructional category, so we weren't under the same kind of pressure to teach as other departments. I was always very afraid of that. For one thing, my own predisposition is more towards research and writing, *but* that wasn't the only reason.

As I said, we were teaching all of those years, but just a few free courses for Anthropology, History, and Foreign Languages. We often ran a course with four students in it, but I'm sitting there watching that, and I'm thinking, "Boy, if we ever get defined as a teaching department, or if our survival ever depends upon our ability to fill courses, we could be in real trouble." On my watch we played down the teaching role, and I was very nervous about it, because most of the university is driven by an FTE formula.

So I always used to emphasize, "We're not a teaching program, but we'll teach for nothing." So for instance I would teach every three years maybe one course on campus. I'd do the Old World Basque culture class, in part because I had to let the well fill up again to a certain level before I dipped into it. You have to get some new students on campus, because the fifteen that wanted to take my class had taken it. That class *did* actually pull its own weight, barely, in terms of FTE minimal course requirement.

Given the esoteric nature of Basque Studies, one small university's student population seemed insufficient to drive big numbers in the classroom. Now, it's turned out, that's not true. I think that the current Basque courses are doing well. In a way, it was a lack of effort in development of the teaching dimension of the program and a lack of leadership in that area on my part.

At some point, as USAC kicked in, it became kind of obvious. . . well, not obvious, but there began to be a small demand for a minor in Basque studies in the sense that we'd have kids coming back from USAC, some from here, some from other universities—who wanted to continue to study things about Basques. Then the student would say, "Well, I've taken the culture class, I've taken a history class, and I've studied a year of the language. Can't I get some kind of recognition for that?"

So we developed the concept of the Basque Studies undergraduate minor. There really wasn't anything organized very systematically back here, so we proposed a minor in Basque Studies, and it was a very straightforward proposal. It took a

couple of years and three or four times to get it approved, as you've got to write it up, and you've got to defend it, and you've got to go through the Courses and Curriculum Committee and that kind of thing; there were a bunch of hoops that you had to deal with.

Finally we've got this minor in Basque studies in the humanities and social sciences, particularly in three departments—Anthropology, History, and Foreign Languages. The requirements weren't real huge, but I think we required two years of the language and maybe nine more credits in Basque literature, Basque history, and Old World Basque culture, something like that. The minor is purely elective. So an engineering major could minor in Basque studies, theoretically.

Despite the fact that there seemed to be a demand for it at the time, my guess is that we didn't have very many people who actually completed the minor; there was just a handful. I bet you that we may have turned out as many PhD's by now as we've turned out minors. I wouldn't be surprised, but I could be wrong. I was not tracking that whole thing.

The minor was one of those ideas that seemed good and proper and obvious at the time, but once it was put into practice, I'm not so sure that it actually produced a whole lot of results. That doesn't mean that I regret having done it at all, and certainly there was no downside for us. Even if there are only a handful of students that completed it, it probably meant something to them and to their lives, and so it's OK.

The tutorial PhD program The PhD is a whole other area, and that was a tricky one. What happened really was that Bill Jacobsen and I, at the time, were the only two people with doctorates affiliated with the program. Bill was kind of an adjunct with us. He was never a full-blown staff member, but he'd been in on it from the beginning, even before I came here. He collaborated in starting the Basque Studies Program and all that. He was very excited, enthusiastic, and very supportive of it.

Then, of course, Virginia, his wife, (at the time—later they were divorced), became interested in Basque Studies. She has a PhD from Berkeley in Assyriology, and she was a very, very competent person in her own right. She came in and basically volunteered her time, acted as our secretary, and helped Jon

Bilbao fool around with the books and that kind of thing. Ultimately, Virginia did get a half-time position, and she was salaried for five years. So the Jacobsens were positive. Virginia and Bill had some real impact on the program.

Bill and I were asked, each in sort of different areas of expertise—he in linguistics and myself in anthropology—by other universities to be the outside member of doctoral dissertation committees, because a student was doing a Basque-related topic, and they really didn't have any expertise. I did one in Utah, one at Purdue, and one over in England; the London School of Economics, possibly . . . or maybe it was Oxford. I think maybe I was technically an outside member of Sandy Ott's committee. And there were one or two other American universities. Bill went on two or three committees as well, but I can't remember at which universities.

They'd ask us to serve, and we agreed to do it. Both of us found it to be a very frustrating experience, because, first of all, we had fairly minimal contact with the student. It was hard for us to have a lot of interaction with the student, although the student might come and use the Basque Library. Students spent from one day up to six months in residence working on their dissertation, using the library, so we got to know them that way. But then they'd go back to their university, and as far as the real process, they were interfacing with their in-house committee and not with us. Sometimes we would be kept apprised, and sometimes we wouldn't. We'd be kind of out the loop. For me to interact with a student in Indiana was sporadic.

It was also frustrating because we couldn't have a lot of control over the quality of the dissertation without having the real power to input into it. In other words, all of a sudden—boom!—we'd receive maybe the final draft of the dissertation, or certainly an advance draft of the dissertation, and the news that the student was going to defend it soon. We'd be asked to read it and provide, from a Basque expertise standpoint, a judgment on whether or not it was good enough for a doctorate. Then the whole committee would look to us and say, "Well, should this be approved or not?"

We got put in a sort of uncomfortable position. It was an enormous responsibility in a way. We were being asked to thumbs up or thumbs down on a person's career. It would always come down to kind of crunch-crunch time. I mean, maybe Bill and I

were both picky, kind of perfectionists in some ways, so that was kind of hard on the students. I think that was true. But, there were also some fundamental problems with all of these theses, particularly since the students in question were often going with advice from people on their committee who really had only a vague idea of the subject matter. So they weren't getting the greatest direction. It was a very frustrating deal and really wasn't a good arrangement.

At that point we, mainly just Bill and I, sat around and talked about it. (Maybe Jon was still here. I can't remember.) I said to him, "I wonder what would happen if we proposed a very unusual formula?" and I laid it out. The idea was that you could do a "tutorial PhD," and it was sort of patterned after what goes on at Oxford or at Cambridge, but not entirely.

We decided to propose a tutorial PhD program that was totally unique. In principle it was a very, very unusual arrangement. It was a pretty radical idea, but we had a lot of credibility on campus, and the graduate dean at the time, John Nellor, was very supportive of us and liked us. It took maybe a year or two, and I had to prepare a bunch of paperwork for it and send it to different committees, and it had to go through the ropes. But the regents approved it. [The Basque Studies tutorial PhD program was established in 1984.]

I argued that there was enough Basque interest to warrant a modest, tiny PhD program, and that Basque expertise was highly scattered around the world and wasn't concentrated in any one place. It was mainly housed at universities around the world but not exclusively. What we could do was to have a PhD program in which a student would come here for at least one year in residence, maybe more. We would also have the flexibility of cycling the student out anywhere in the world to work under an external mentor that might possibly be at another university, or possibly somebody like Caro Baroja, who wasn't at any university. And we would then transfer any credits earned back here towards the degree.

For instance, my example would be, say, if you were going to do Basque immigration in Argentina, we would look for an immigration specialist at the University of Buenos Aires and connect with that person and say, "Would you take this student under your wing if he or she comes down and enrolls formally in courses at your university for six months or a year, or, maybe,

would you serve as the outside committee member? We will pay you, and we will bring you to Reno for the defense." That was the model that we proposed.

What it really was was a directed dissertation. It was not about training a student to be an anthropologist or an historian or whatever. I said, "You know, maybe we could do a deal where a student would have to enter the program with a master's degree. Otherwise, you couldn't even apply."

That way we could involve departments at UNR that had master's programs but not PhD programs, so that we were not getting into a situation where we were trying to run parallel doctoral programs. Two of the three departments that we were involved with, Foreign Languages and Anthropology—we had these working relationships with those departments through our volunteer teaching—only had master's degrees at that point, and the third department, History, had a PhD program, but I don't think they'd given out a doctorate in about ten years. So their programs were *en tela de juicio* or, I mean, up in the air.

I knew there was a lot of ambivalence and a big internal debate within History, at that time, about whether they should even offer a PhD. I don't think there is today. It was a controversial issue within the department, and I don't know all the details, but there were detractors and proponents of the idea.

We had an admissions committee that consisted of myself ex-officio—in other words, the coordinator ex-officio—Bill Jacobsen ex-officio, and then the chairs of the three departments. Eventually, they began to argue for a delegated person. But it was a five-person selection committee, with the three departments and two people from Basque Studies. The idea would be that you had to come in with a master's in hand, so you were already an anthropologist or a historian. Then you would spend one year in residence, and we would negotiate the terms of the degree, of the dissertation, and any kind of coursework that might be required, and there would be a participating department.

In effect, the doctoral program would be tailored to the student's interests and needs and would profile on an ad hoc basis each student's program of study within these broad outlines. Given the kind of loose nature of the program, in that it was an ad hoc program within very broad or wide parameters, the whole idea was that every incoming student would be treated as a unique case to a degree—within broad parameters, no, but

narrowly, yes—so that the details would always have to be negotiated. That was the idea. That's why we called it "tutorial."

If you were an historian, we would sit down with the History Department, and we would negotiate what History expected of you, but the student would not necessarily have to meet all of the requisites for the PhD in that department. History was the only one with a PhD program at the time, so that's why I'm using it as an example. So you would get a doctorate in Basque studies and, in parenthesis, history, or anthropology or whatever.

I don't know if the Foreign Language Department has a PhD today, but they didn't then. Now Anthropology has a PhD program. The Anthropology PhD program, by the way, started out totally predicated upon ours. I mean, their involvement in ours provided them with the model. They proposed a tutorial PhD, but it very quickly evolved into a totally standard PhD program. So the Anthropology PhD program is the traditional American PhD program with all of its requisites. Well, once Anthropology got its own PhD program, it began to impose more of its own requirements on our students.

Originally, the idea was only to have a couple of students at one time. Actually, somewhere along the line, we were able to establish the idea that there would be two graduate fellowships devoted to this program, and they were a regular part of our state budget. They were a part of the center's, or the program's budget in those days. Of course, you need two fellowships to even have a couple of students around, because you don't just give it for one year, and then the student goes back and competes again.

If you commit, then you're committing to two or three years at least for the student to complete the study. So if you got two fellowships, and you committed one, then the next year you only had one, and if you committed that one too, the third year you were out of fellowships until the first student finished and freed one up. The capacity for building growth within that program is extremely limited. Those two fellowships are great to have, but they are very finite in terms of their impact.

In practice, like a lot of other things, the tutorial PhD program didn't come off exactly as we foresaw it. It worked up to a degree. I mean, it didn't work perfectly ever. For example, the whole relationship with Anthropology, I think, is one that needs to be

renegotiated, or it has to be negotiated all the time, because Anthro has its own PhD program.

I know Basque studies PhD graduate Lisa Corcostegui, for instance, was forced to go back and take some courses that you might call remedial or whatever. Lisa came out of Foreign Languages and then wanted to do her degree in anthropology, so she triggered part of the problem. I mean, if she had stayed in Foreign Languages, say, and she decided to do something that was more literature related, or if Foreign Languages had agreed to sponsor her dance dissertation, which they might have, I don't think that they would have said no, it wouldn't have been such a problem. But she wanted to do it in anthropology, which is fine, but given her background and given her MA, the Anthropology Department was more reticent to just accept her MA as the equivalent of their MA and then accept her for just directed dissertation research, and that slowed her down.

Lisa had to do some coursework, and she had to take the four-field exam on anthropology. She had to learn enough to be examined in four fields, which is not easy even for a standard anthro student. It's probably as challenging as it gets in terms of PhD programs, because they test you over linguistics, physical anthropology (which is all about biology and genetics and is its own world), and archaeology, which has very little to do with cultural anthropology. So it's a real full plate. But she wanted to do it, and she did do it, and I commend her for it.

Unlike the minor, I think that that program has been extraordinarily successful. We probably have the best track record at UNR of bang-for-the buck in terms of selecting students and getting them out the other end. We have produced eight PhD's in twelve or fourteen years, which is fine. The idea isn't to flood the whole world with Basque studies PhD's. We've had sixteen people altogether since the beginning of the deal. Gorka Aulestia was the first one to get the degree in December of 1987, followed by Joxe Mallea, Linda White, Cameron Watson, Pauliina Raento, Javier Cillero, Lisa Corcostegui, and Pedro Oiarzabal. Magda Czajkowska-Vazquez's been there for a long time, and Nancy Faires is still in the program. We've got three new students—Juan Arana, Argitxu Camus, and Beatriz Robinson.

We've only had three students who started the program who did not complete it. One was killed in an accident—Rodolfo



Basque Studies Program PhD students Javi Cillero and Lisa Corcostegui at the Basque Studies Library, September 1998.

Luera—one was asked to leave, and one decided to leave. Rodolfo Luera stepped off a curb down in California somewhere, and a truck ran him over and killed him. He was a pretty good student, too. Then there's a little category of people in there who were still question marks, because they're still studying. But that's a pretty incredible track record given the nature of the effort.

I don't have the statistics, but my guess is that if you turn out one in four who starts, that's big. Our dropout rate is about as high as the doctorate rate of most PhD programs—one in four, one in five. Essentially we graduated about half of the people that went in, and of the other half, half are still studying. We only have three out of sixteen who are absolutely not going to complete the program for whatever reason. Well, hey! I think the UNR History Department, for instance, went ten years without producing a doctorate, even though they had that program on the books. I think ours has been a big success.

The one dimension that really never happened was the idea of cycling the student off to be at a foreign venue getting credit

and all of that. That never really quite happened. Gorka had an expert on *bertsolaris* [Basque verse improvisers], Juan Mari Lekuona, who came here for the defense. Then Mallea had an historian from the University of Mexico, from the Autónoma. I don't think Linda had anybody like that. I don't think Cillero did, as I can recall. Lisa didn't. Well, she was involved with dance expert Juan Antonio Urbeltz, but I think fairly informally. I don't think he was part of the defense or anything like that.

Bottom line, we've got a minor, and we've got a PhD program and nothing in between. You can't get a master's in Basque studies, and you can't get a BA in Basque studies. It's kind of strange, really. You have a minor or a doctorate. I don't know what you would do with a BA in Basque studies. I can see where a doctorate *might* help you get a job somewhere teaching or whatever, but not a BA in Basque studies.

A minor makes sense if a person wants to spend a little bit of their discretionary credits in learning about the Basque heritage, because it's not their main major as an undergraduate. But having a BA in Basque studies might be very difficult to translate into real-world opportunity. It might be even difficult to go on to graduate school with a BA in Basque studies. I mean, students are probably better advised, if they're interested in Basque anthropology, to get a BA degree from the Anthropology Department, then apply to the Basque Studies tutorial PhD program or apply to graduate school elsewhere and do their dissertation on Basques. Those possibilities exist.

<i>Looking back: operating without Basque government support</i>	One of the things that's kind of fascinating to me is that everything I've talked about, so far, is older than the University of the Basque Country. I mean, we started almost ten years before its establishment. But we also preceded the death of Franco, the creation of Eusko Jaurlaritza, and the Basque and Navarrese public university systems, which all changed dramatically the role of this program.
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I think Basque President José Antonio Ardanza, when he visited Reno, talked about how we were a candle in the dark.²¹ I mean, we really were. It was virtually impossible for anybody to pursue Basque studies in the Basque Country itself, calling them such, under Franco. There was a little bit going on, and José



"Basque President José Antonio Ardanza, when he visited Reno, talked about how we were a candle in the dark." Bill Douglass explains the history of the Basque Book Series to Basque President José Antonio Ardanza during an official visit to UNR, 1988. Left to right: Carmelo Urza, Bill Jacobsen, Bill Douglass, Marc Ugalde (in back), two unidentified individuals, and President Ardanza leaning on the table.

Miguel de Barandiaran was fooling around and was doing his thing, but he was a very isolated man. The Jesuit University of Deusto was doing a little bit, but they, I think, were very cautious, so were Julio Caro Baroja and Koldo Mitxelena.

All of these people were pretty much denied standard academic careers, because of the political situation throughout most of their productive lives. They were all kind of lone-wolf, semi-isolated people. It was even true on the other side. In Iparralde, for instance, Eugène Goyheneche was always trying to do something, but there was no university on the French-Basque side either. So we were the only truly institutionalized Basque studies academic program in the world at that point. Reno, in that sense had a very, very different kind of role. It was small, tiny, but it was a precursor, if you will, to the subsequent academic organization of Basque studies in Europe.

Plus, we had Jon Bilbao here, which meant that *everybody* around the world involved in Basque studies knew about him.

Jon was a clearinghouse for information. We were *dos gatos* [two cats], but he was a *titan* or magnet in terms of information, in part because people not only wanted to be in Jon's bibliography—they wanted recognition in his bibliography—but they also wanted bibliographic information from him, because he hadn't published his bibliography yet. Everybody knew that it was in the works, knew that it was imminent, but imminent for a nine- or ten-volume work like that would take a number of years. So people would write Jon all the time, asking for bibliographic references in their particular areas of interest. It was a two-way interaction. It was perfect for our collection development.

So in a way, we knew what people were doing. We probably had a better idea in Reno of what was going on in Basque studies, as fragmented as they were around the globe, than anybody else, including José Arteche, who was the librarian of the Diputación de Gipuzkoa [Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa]. I mean, Arteche was hosting people, and he knew a whole lot, but I don't think he had much of a feel for all of this diasporic stuff around the world. Everything was so fragmented in those days, and it was so politicized, and you had to be so careful. Anything that was being published over in the Basque Country, of course, was being closely censored.

So people began to send us some clandestine material anonymously. We would get a box of, maybe, books. I mean, some people were afraid to even have Gallop. That's an overreaction, because I don't think anybody ever went to jail in Franco's Spain for having Gallop, but there were some people who were that nervous. We'd get a box of political stuff, ETA stuff, from Barcelona with no return address. People just wanted Basque material collected somewhere outside the Basque Country, where it would be preserved.

Then when the changes happened in Spain after Franco's death in 1975, suddenly the Basques and Navarrese were in a great measure of control of their affairs and could build their own internal institutions. They got a Basque university system off the ground, and the University of Deusto created its own Basque Studies Program, and the University of Navarra hired Barandiaran.

All of a sudden, the culture was no longer proscribed, and our role shifted. It's fair to say that we became much more oriented towards the diaspora at that point. We had real strong

credentials for that, because we had produced *Amerikanuak* and some other publications that were diaspora related as part of the Basque Book Series. (Maybe 20 percent of the book titles in the series would be diaspora. However the Basque Book Series is very, very eclectic.)

I wanted to be cautious, and we had to make some conscious decisions in order not to compete for scarce resources in the Basque Country. The Basque institutions began to emerge, and then every folk dance group . . . everybody was in the face of Eusko Jaurlaritza, asking for money. There was a big rush. It was natural, because, suddenly, there was this money that had never been there before, and everybody wanted some of it. But we did not go after any of that money.

The first support that this program ever had from the Basque government was not our idea; it was their idea. It was with respect to Ardanza's visit in 1988.

The Basque government didn't have a diaspora-affairs orientation from the beginning. The government had been in existence for seven or eight years by then and hadn't really done anything with respect to the diaspora. I don't think that they had their *Asuntos Exteriores* in place. Right around the early 1980s the Basque government held a congress or two, in the Basque Country, on the *Colectividades Vascas en el Mundo* [the Basque Communities in the World]. They invited people from around the world, and Jon Bilbao and Gloria Castresana went.²² I didn't go. At that point, Josu Legarreta was Joseba Arregi's assistant, and Arregi was the *Consejero de Cultura* [Minister of Culture] when Ardanza came in.²³ Josu was in the front office, because I remember visiting Arregi, and I had to go through Josu.

Josu got in touch with me on behalf of Arregi, and he was sort of a contact person with the diaspora under Arregi. He knew San Francisco and Boise. But I don't think they had a formal diaspora person, and there was not an office in charge of the diaspora relationship yet.

I knew Josu, and he knew me. Josu said, "The president's going to Idaho, Nevada, and California, and we want you all to organize meetings with the governors in the three states, and he'll have meetings with key business people."

It was a very unrealistic request, because to get a meeting with a governor was possible in Idaho and Nevada, but in California it was impossible to get a meeting with the mayor of

San Francisco, let alone the governor. It was even tough to get him an invitation to the San Francisco Basque Cultural Center, because it was all people from Iparralde. It was dominated by French-Basques who were pretty anti-Basque nationalism and who were pretty suspicious of Eusko Jaurilaritza. There were a lot of Basques in San Francisco who were either indifferent to or even a little bit hostile to the club hosting Ardanza's visit. Finally Ardanza ended up going to the San Francisco Basque Cultural Center.

Josu wanted all of this recognition, if you will, and they were particularly sensitive, as I recall, because I think King Juan Carlos had just come to the United States. The Spanish press had been pretty appalled, because they were defining the trip as kind of a failure. King Juan Carlos didn't get to see the president of the United States, and he invited a bunch of Hollywood movie stars to some kind of an event, and about 90 percent didn't come. So Josu was concerned about that and about setting up protocol.

I told Josu, "You have to treat each of these states differently, and Idaho should arrange the Idaho visit, and they'll do it. I mean, Idaho Secretary of State, Pete Cenarrusa, will help. I'm sure they'll do a good job up there. We can do some stuff in Nevada, but in California it's going to be virtually impossible to accomplish anything."

Well, Josu didn't like that response, and he wasn't entirely sure that it was accurate.

Right about then a European PNV parliamentarian, Jon Gangoiti, visited the program. And one of the things he said was, "Well, this program is fantastic." That was always the reaction from Europe. Anybody—particularly politicians and newspaper people—that would come and visit this place would say, "We didn't know this was here," or, "We couldn't imagine that there'd be something like this." Well, some of them kind of knew, because they came on U.S. State Department-sponsored visits, and they had requested us on their agenda. So they knew enough about our program to be curious, but they were never really quite prepared for what they found, and Jon Gangoiti was no exception. He said, "This is so great. So how much support do you have from the Basque government?"

I said, "We have none."

He said, "Well, that's terrible. That's shameful. There should be support from the Basque government for this."



"Anybody—particularly politicians and newspaper people—that would come and visit this place, would say, 'We didn't know this was here,' or, 'We couldn't imagine that there'd be something like this.'" Jokin Intxausti (center), a minister of the Basque government, tours the Basque Studies Program with Carmelo Urza (left) and Bill Douglass in 1986.

I said, "We've never asked for money for three reasons. First of all, nobody asked us from Europe to start this thing. It was our idea to start it, and the people in Nevada fund it. We get grants, and we have even a few donations, and that's where we get our funding. So I don't really see an obligation on the part of the Basque Country to support us. Secondly, there's a bunch of new institutions in the Basque Country—I mean, a whole infrastructure's being developed over there—and there's a lot of competition for scarce resources, and I'm ambivalent about trying to put our hand out at the same time that there are so many local programs that are basically underfunded. Thirdly, I don't know what it would be like to get money from the Basque government, because there are no strings attached to our money. I don't know whether getting money from the government there would be with some strings attached; it might allow them to start to drive part of our agenda, and I'm not prepared to permit that."

Gangoiti said, "Ardanza's coming, and it would be really appropriate if you could think of something that would really

help your program and that Ardanza could announce publicly. Arregi's coming with him, and it would probably be Arregi who would sign the agreement, and whatever happens would come out of the Ministry of Culture. Think about it."

Meanwhile, I told Jon about my concerns about the agenda of the Ardanza visit. Jon was back in the Basque Country by then.

Gangoiti said, "You've got to come over and talk to Arregi, because he is the one most responsible for that. And please bring an idea about what might be appropriate as some kind of support from the Basque government for your program." (Jon was tied very closely with the higher echelons. He was quite close to Xabier Arzallus, then President of the PNV, Ardanza, and Arregi. He was an influential guy.) I agreed to do that.

Jon and I talked about it and kicked it around. I thought about it, and I also talked to Carmelo Urza.

I decided to fly over to Europe. I remember Legarreta was in the outer office. He knew that we were going to be requesting some money. He was kind of in control of the budget, and he thought it might come out of some monies under his control, so he was very nervous and very concerned about that. He also knew I was going to be talking about Ardanza's visiting agenda. I went in with Jon Gangoiti to see Arregi. Legarreta didn't sit in. We talked about the agenda, and I convinced Arregi that we should treat the three states differently, and they lowered the expectations about California, fortunately.

Arregi approved our request. We asked for Eusko Jaurlaritza to provide a visiting professorship, so a professor from the Basque Country could spend a year in Reno. We also asked for two student scholarships in each direction—for two American students to go the Basque Country through Carmelo's program, and for two Basque students to come and study at UNR.

The Boise Basques did a good job, and Ardanza met with their governor and key politicians. In Nevada we set up a meeting with Governor Richard Bryan, who was a very good friend of ours, and Ardanza signed a cultural agreement with the state of Nevada. The governor hosted a dinner in a restaurant in Carson City. Then we had an event back at the university. Ardanza gave a little talk, and the chancellor of the university received him, and that's when *they* signed an agreement between the university and Eusko Jaurlaritza, which included our request.

So what we asked for had nothing really to do with supporting our program per se. We were doing it through the Basque Studies Program, and it was going to be great, but we were essentially asking for support that would benefit people—two students in the abstract and also an established professor from the Basque Country.

As it turned out, the deal never worked very efficiently. I don't know, the student thing might have, but the visiting professorship, which was the only thing I was involved in, as the other was through USAC, never worked very well. I mean, once or twice it worked, but most of the time it didn't function, because it got very politicized over there, and it fell afoul of the budgetary process.

They were lucky to get the annual budget approved six months after the year had already started, and they couldn't approve that year's candidate until the budget was in place. Then they felt that it had to be an ad hoc thing every year, and it had to be announced in the *Boletín* (the Basque government's Official Gazette), but it couldn't be announced until the funds were in place. So they would announce the opportunity in the *Boletín* in June or July of every year, which nobody's reading in July, so there were no applications, and somebody's supposed to come here in September.

Then at the last minute they'd find some ABD person without a PhD, or someone who had just got their PhD but hadn't even published yet—just some *soltero* [single man] or *soltera* [single woman] that could make a decision in two minutes—whereas, an established professor with a family needed a year of anticipation.

Plus, Arregi was very uncomfortable with the whole deal, because it should have been under the Ministry of Education, and he had to pay for it. So he was anxious to shift it to education, which eventually they did. But it didn't work any better in education because of these other problems. In a way, it was a good idea in the abstract, but in practice it didn't work out very well.

Now we have a new agreement with the Basque government. Goio Monreal's going to be the first academic to come under the William A. Douglass Distinguished Scholar Award. [Goio was in Reno for the 2005-2006 academic year.] That's basically the same idea, except it's going to be set up differently, and we're going to invite top people a couple of years in advance. They're already

talking about who might come after Goio. [The 2006-2007 William A. Douglass Distinguished Scholar was political scientist Pedro Ibarra.]

Also in this new agreement the decision-making resides within the Center for Basque Studies, and it doesn't have to be made within one budgetary cycle. In other words, you can look over the horizon. I don't know how they're doing that, because their entire budget is annual. But I guess maybe they'll do it with an asterisk. Maybe they'll say to the recipient, "OK. We'd like you to be able to go, but if the funding is not available at the last minute, you can't go." I'm just speculating.

So that was the first and only Basque government support that we ever had until just before I retired and before Joseba Zulaika became director of the program.

Joseba wanted to do Basque online courses. We got approached by Extended Studies, and we were being pulled in the direction of teaching online, and Joseba liked the idea, and he convinced me. We approached the Basque government in 1998 or 1999. I was over there, and I talked to Iñaki Aguirre, current General Secretary for External Affairs. Iñaki kicked me to the Ministry of Education, and they liked the idea to develop the online courses in English. In fact, the Minister of Education,



Left to right: Goio Monreal, first William A. Douglass Distinguished Scholar Award recipient, Harold Morehouse, Bill Douglass, and Joe Crowley, November 2005.

Ander Gurrutxaga [then assistant to the Minister of Education] and another person from education and I had lunch at a restaurant just up the street from Eusko Jaurlaritza. I remember discussing this and getting a commitment actually from Ander Gurrutxaga, that, yes, indeed they would fund it.

But again, I didn't see any problem with us being involved with the Basque government or using the Basque government's money, because essentially that's a global outreach service. It introduces Basque instruction into the Anglo world. I mean, there are other forums now, and I think some other Internet instructional initiatives have been taken in the Basque Country, if I'm not mistaken. It's not unique. But when I was proposing it, it was the only one of its kind. I didn't feel hugely vested in it, because I was retiring, and, at least, I thought that I wasn't going to sit down and write an online course. [Eventually Douglass and Zulaika did co-author an online course on Basque anthropology.] So I was advocating it more as an administrator rather than as a player. Then Zulaika took over and ran harder with the concept.

I thought it was entirely proper and appropriate for the Ministry of Education in the Basque Country to provide some funding to develop course materials, and they did. They gave us \$60,000 to develop the first few courses. That got approved just about the time I retired, and that was part of Joseba's momentum. So that kind of opened the door to our funding with the Basque government, too, and then Zulaika has built on that. But the first opening wedge was with the Ministry of Education. Since then Joseba has gone after regular support from the Basque government. I think the center had about 90,000 euros [an equivalent of over \$121,000 as of April 2007] in 2005, including the Internet courses and some other things too. The Basque government provides 15 or 20 percent of the center's funding.

Post-1999 and Joseba Zulaika I retired on December 31, 1999. For a couple of years prior to that event there was considerable nervousness among the staff. In thirty-three years the Basque Studies Program had had but one coordinator. There was a kind of, "What will happen to us now?" in the air. I held a couple of staff meetings at which I sermonized and cheerleaded: "You'll be fine. If survival of this place truly depends on a single person, then we haven't built much of a foundation!"



Bill Douglass's retirement party at Luciano's Ristorante, Reno, December 22, 1999. From left to right: Linda Ugalde, Kate Camino, Marc Ugalde, Jill Berner, Carmelo Urza, Bill Douglass, and Bill's wife, Jan.

About that time the university decided to subject every department to outside review. Most of the chairs wanted to be among the last to undergo the scrutiny. It all entailed a great deal of preparation. You had to write an extensive history, current status, and future prospects of your department and then receive three outside reviewers for several days to answer their questions. Well, I decided that rather than an imposition it was a marvelous opportunity for our staff to think about and transition to their post-Douglass future. I went to the dean, who was Robert "Bob" Mead, having succeeded Ann Ronald, and volunteered our program for the first review.

Linda White, who was the assistant coordinator, prepared most of our report, and central administration appointed Robert Clark of George Mason University, Begoña Aretxaga of Harvard, and Jacqueline "Jacquie" Urla of the University of Massachusetts as the outside review team. When it was over, the final report stated that, in the program, UNR had an underappreciated jewel of international significance. The recommendation was that the Basque Studies Program receive a high priority in UNR's budget for the upcoming legislature. It also stated that our name should be changed from "Program" to "Center" since we had far outstripped the original designation and were now a multifaceted center.

I met with several administrators from central administration to review the report. They started kidding around, but semi-seriously, that we should change the name—they were avoiding the growth and resources issues. So I gave a speech in which I stated that since I was retiring I had little stake in the outcome, but if they were serious about their own process they needed to take all of the report into account. I also said that if they chose to ignore the program's potential then it was their loss. After all, wasn't the whole idea of program review meant to identify centers of excellence and then foster them? Well, Bob Mead jumped on that, and before it was over I had a verbal commitment of support for our future budget requests. They also agreed to support the idea that my position should be restored to a full-time one (1.0 FTE) again. This was relatively easy since my salary as a veteran full professor could about fund a junior position. In fact, they managed to deliver on that commitment rather quickly.

Clearly, the center has gone in some new directions under Zulaika. I think he is more interested in pedagogy than I was, which is fine. He had already stirred the online stuff up, and he was also the main guy behind teaching courses on campus.

Zulaika has encouraged all of the staff to teach at least one course on campus; I don't know if it's one a semester or one a year. We didn't really have that requirement under me. In other words, I never went down the hall and said to Linda, "Why don't you teach Basque next semester?"

Linda would come down the hall and say to me, "I'd like to teach Basque next semester. Is that OK?"

So that was the way it worked in the old days, and now I think there has been a collective decision by the staff to do more standardized teaching through the various departments. I don't think, however, that they get compensated by them. So in effect, they're doing it as part of their salary and their duties as staff.

Joseba, Linda, Gloria, and Sandy are taking instruction in a whole other direction, and they seem to be getting a lot more students than we used to get. Of course, the university is a lot bigger, but still . . . Also, I think that this is due to USAC, because you get kids going from here to the Basque Country, and then when they come back, they take some of these courses if they didn't get them over there. So, there's a little bit of a change. But essentially, they are now a Basque teaching department amongst other things.

It's a little tricky, because basically there's always going to be that tradeoff between research and teaching. You have that same tradeoff in a standard academic department. At the center, maybe the thrust is reversed. Here, if the primary mission is research and publication, then the teaching has to be kept in perspective. In the average academic department, people are teaching a large course load, and so the problem is how do they get some time for their research? Here, it's sort of the opposite. How do you get some time for your teaching?

Then there's the whole online thing, and I pretty much stayed away from it. But my guess is that it can represent a big time commitment, because that's all tutorial, and you're dealing one-on-one with a student over the Internet. I don't know how that goes, but it may be more demanding to teach five people that way than to teach fifteen or twenty students in a classroom setting. There's a way in which the whole virtual university approach, that is now very developed here, has particular cost attached to it. In other words, it does bite more into the time of the staff. Any staff person that is taking on students in that capacity, in effect, is taking on a teaching load that is potentially significant. It's a question of philosophy, of mission, of priorities.

Zulaika also came in with this whole publications program—a Classics Series, a Literature and Translation Series, the Proceedings of Conferences Series—and that got to be pretty elaborate. He basically went to the Basque Country and lobbied effectively. I was involved in some of that, because Zulaika would take me into the Basque government, and we'd talk to the Minister of Culture or the Minister of Education. Little by little we made our case.

Zulaika is running things very differently than I was, but I have no judgment to pass or make on the last five years. Zulaika has had some incredible successes, both in Europe in getting funding and support for the program and here in setting up the Center for Basque Studies Advisory Board that I'm the vice-chair of. I was skeptical about the board, frankly, because I was not sure whether it was a good idea. It's proven to be an incredible idea, a wonderful thing.

The advisory board is made up of largely non-academics, but there are also two or three academics on it, and it's getting to be a large board—I don't know, fifteen people or something. They're mainly powerful, powerful people from around the world from

business and other professions. Just the other day I got word that Xabier Irala—the president of BBK [Bilbao-Bizkaia Savings Bank in its Basque acronym] and former CEO of Iberia [the largest Spanish airline]—is going to join our board. I met with him when I was just over there and talked to him about it, and he's now said yes.

We've got people like Irala and Juan Zelaia, a Basque industrialist, on the board. Those are the kinds of people that we've attracted onto the board. Of course, John Echeverria, the board's chairman, and his family have been incredible. They made a \$500,000 donation, essentially, to the center. So all of that is mind-blowing to me. [In 2006 Bill donated a private house to the center to be used as the residence of the William A. Douglass Scholar Award recipient.]

Zulaika has also got an endowment fund going, and we already have about \$1,000,000 in it, and that throws off some income to the center. There's a lot of excitement surrounding the center. I mean, kind of coincidentally or casually or serendipitously we're going to have this incredible space in the Knowledge Center, and that's exciting. The center is going to make a huge qualitative leap just in terms of its physical appearance and the commodiousness of its space and all of that. I mean, wonderful, exciting things have happened over the last five years.

My guess is that Zulaika's presence has been a critical difference, a critical factor. Some of what has happened over the last five years might have happened under me, but I think some of it wouldn't have. I mean, we wouldn't have gone as strongly in the direction of teaching online. In part, I'm a bit of a dinosaur when it comes to the Internet, anyway. I don't understand it that well. I don't use it that much compared to most people. It's also a generational thing. If I had been providing the leadership, my guess is that I wouldn't have had either the interest or the expertise to provide quality leadership in that area, and Zulaika did. So there's all of that. I'm sure we wouldn't have had this advisory board if I had been running the show, because I was skeptical when we started it.

Then there are also our successes in the legislature. When I retired, we only had three professional positions, and one of them was not tenure track. It was Linda White's position, and that's another story. Then we got two more positions in the legislature, so we went from essentially three professional positions to five.

The state of Nevada's support has just about doubled under Joseba.

I've come to realize now, because I've gone down to the legislature in three or four capacities on different occasions over the last two sessions of the legislature, I had no idea how well and how thoroughly we were perceived by certain very powerful people in the Nevada legislature. I mean, I was totally blown away by that.

At one point, in 2001, we had a lobbying session with Joe Crowley and Senator Bill Raggio, and we met with Raggio, whom I know, but he's not what I would call a friend or something. This was when we were trying to get the funding for two new faculty positions, the ones that Gloria and Sandy came on in 2002. Actually, it was complicated. Our positions went in as part of UNR's request but failed to survive the process as a priority. We were, however, able to receive a green light to do our own lobbying for last-minute inclusion at the end of the legislative session—should the legislature be so inclined.

Basically we were in Raggio's office, I think Joseba was there, and somebody said, "Well, Bill Douglass is here, because we want him to tell you a little bit about the history of the program."

I started talking, and about thirty seconds later Raggio just looked at me and said, "Bill, believe me, I know all about the program. So let's not waste our time reviewing that. I'm very, very supportive of what you all are doing, and I admire what you've done."

(Raggio had been the contact person in the legislature when we had lobbied with Bob Laxalt, back in the early times, but the program had evolved a whole lot since then. We hadn't been to the legislature in that kind of capacity for fifteen years, I mean, doing a one-on-one sort of lobbying effort. When we went in before, Bill Raggio wasn't quite as powerful as he is today. He was certainly a senator and an important guy from the north, but I don't think he was running the Senate Finance Committee in those days. Maybe he was, but I don't remember him in that capacity. But he was the kind of guy that if he got out there and went to bat for you, it could make a difference even back in the 1980s.)

Then Raggio said, "You have my support, but it is a tight year, and we're not going to know for a couple more weeks what kind of money we have. But if there's anything left over, you have my support for it."

Dina Titus, a Nevada State Senator from down south, is also hugely supportive of us, and she's at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). We had some earlier contacts with her, when she first came to UNLV. She's a political scientist, and she was actually doing, I think, an article on evolving regionalism in Andalusia within the Spain of the autonomies, right after the approval of the Spanish Constitution, probably in the early 1980s. She got in touch with me, and I'd sent her some references, and that's how I got to know her. Then she got married to Tom Wright, who was a Latin American historian at UNLV. Both Tom and Dina have taught for USAC, and particularly he's taught in Chile and in Donostia in the summer of 2005.

During the same 2001 legislature session, Titus asked us to come down to the legislature, where she made a statement regarding the Center for Basque Studies as "my favorite program within the entire university system," before the Senate Finance Committee, so it's part of the public record. She stated at this session not only how much she admired the center, but she was looking forward after the session to going over to San Sebastián to visit her old haunts, and she gave a big speech about how incredible USAC was.

So Joe Crowley, Carmelo, and I went down to Carson City, because Crowley and I sort of started USAC, and, of course, Carmelo has turned it into something totally way beyond anything we imagined. It's the strongest single foreign-student presence still in the Basque Country. Well, in the legislature Titus introduced a measure to honor USAC.

So we got both positions. I thought we might, if we were lucky, get one. I mean, I would have viewed that as a huge success, and we ended up with two.

Then the Center for Basque Studies hired both Gloria and Sandy in 2002. At the same time, Joseba Gabilondo was hired with my position, on my vacancy, if you will, in 2001. He replaced me because the search was not for an anthropologist. It was for the best possible Basque specialist, and that was the condition, and we didn't specify the field. [Gabilondo left UNR in 2005.]

The money was available, maybe July 1, but we weren't ready to spend it in 2001, because there had to be a search, and that usually takes six months. Sandy was at Oxford University, and she had to give notice and had to finish out her contract. Sandy came probably in September of 2002.

I think Gloria was just finished with her PhD but really didn't have a position anywhere, so Gloria was a little more flexible than Sandy and was pretty much available, and Zulaika just said to her, "I'll give you some travel money and some kind of a stipend, and, in effect, you can go to work for us early. Go ahead and start."

Gloria had a whole bunch of ideas about what she wanted to do and individual initiatives going down regarding diaspora, and she was going over to the Basque Country about that time. So Zulaika probably "hired her" in January or February—I mean, put her on as a consultant or something. Her actual full-blown position didn't start until July 1, 2002.

So the Center for Basque Studies has become a more mature, more complex, more multifaceted program. It's a very different animal now. It is quite unique in the world of academia. I mean, it's a strange animal in a lot of ways. It's not a standard department, and it's got this huge library dimension. I don't know exactly what the center is. I think partly it's had the flexibility to become what it is, because it's not in one of the traditional boxes. It's a library program; it teaches; it's on the Internet. It started a studies abroad consortium, and it does a lot of research and writing. It's got a publishing program, and it edited for many years the Basque Book Series at the University of Nevada Press.

It's all those things; it's all of the above. I don't know what defines it. I don't even know what our mission statement says. I don't know if they have a mission statement, and if they do, I would be hard-pressed to write it.

Basque politics and ethnicity

The Basque Studies Program was started during the Franco era. At that time, from a Spanish nationalist standpoint, to even have something called the Basque Studies Program was an obscenity. I think it's fair to say that Spanish nationalism in this Francoist guise denied any kind of relevance to regionalism and nationalism within Spain and treated its own brand of nationalism as a kind of universalism, but at the very least it had its own boundaries.

It certainly wasn't universal globally, but it was viewed as the Hispanic reality or whatever you want to call it. Anything that even suggested that there were internal cultural distinctions to be made within Iberia was grounds for imprisonment—grounds for all kinds of things. And here we were in Reno, where they couldn't really lay a glove on us.

I'm sure that there were people in the Franco machine, and certainly in the press, such as *ABC* [a Spanish right-wing daily paper], who didn't like the idea at all that an American university would even start something called a Basque studies program. I mean, culture was political, and it still is, and there was no way to get away from that.

Then we hired Jon Bilbao, and he had been very close to President Aguirre, although by the time Jon came to Reno, he was not a big-time player in the Basque government-in-exile, but he still knew all of those people. That whole Basque government-in-exile thing in New York had broken down. I know that in the 1950s Jon stayed in touch with the Aguirre contingent in St. Jean de Luz, and he was involved with a magazine titled *Eusko-Jakintza*. Jon worked with Barandiaran in getting a couple of issues of that magazine out in an editorial capacity.

Jon also became one of the organizers of an international conference held sometime in 1956, in St. Jean de Luz. It was like a world congress of Basque studies. They were trying to keep the flame alive. So, I mean, he had his oar in the water, yes, but I think his whole commitment became more and more cultural and less and less political over time, although he was always a huge sympathizer of Basque nationalism.

But the fact of the matter is that Jon was a Spanish teacher back East, and he'd been expelled from Spain for some of his earlier activities. So he was pretty neutralized, and he was interested in starting a Basque studies program or some kind of Basque-related effort. Jon was working hard on his bibliography, and his main passion in life at that point was getting *Eusko Bibliographia* out, and by then he was in the third decade of working on it. Between *Eusko Bibliographia* and trying to build a program with me, his plate was full.

People have said that Jon was in the CIA, but I don't know whether he was in it or not. But I do know, because Jon told me, that way back when—I guess it would have been right after the Second World War—Jon, Aguirre, and all those guys were involved

with the U.S. Secret Service. They'd done that spy thing down in Latin America for the U.S. government, for the Allies, because they were hoping that the Allies were going to take Franco out. The U.S. was trying to decide how it was going to interface with Franco's Spain after Mussolini and Hitler were gone.

I know Jon had an apartment in Madrid for, at least, a little while. They'd use it for parties to be able to have contacts with people in the Franco government, the American Embassy, and the Office of Strategic Service, which evolved into the CIA after World War II as we got into the Cold War. Jon had an American passport, because he was born in Puerto Rico, and he was a very socially astute person. He had personal charm.

That was even before the creation of ETA, way before ETA. It was not tied in at all to the more modern or the more contemporary issues. So I know Jon was involved in some of that, but formally with the CIA, I don't know.

At one point I had a visitation—and I've gone public with this since—from the CIA. It was the day before I went to Australia to do field research, sometime in the early 1980s. This would have been under President Ronald Reagan. I was contacted, right after Reagan first got into office, and William Casey was the head of the CIA.

The CIA had university contacts around and throughout the country, and they'd have somebody on campus, the kind of liaison in whatever they were doing. I don't know what they were doing. Anyway, the light bulb came on in the head of UNR's clandestine CIA rep, "Well, jeez, you know, there's ETA, that's a problem, and these folks are close to the Basque government."

So these two CIA guys came to see me. One of them was military, navy personnel or something, out of San Francisco, and the other one was attached to the American Embassy in Madrid.

They wanted me to put an agent in USAC as a student to try and penetrate ETA through the university system, but I told them I wouldn't do it. Then they asked if I would be willing to monitor all of the press over there and send them periodic reports, and I said, "No. I don't have staff for that. This is a public institution and a public library. If you people want to send somebody here to read the newspapers or whatever, we'll accommodate them. We'll give them a desk. Anybody that comes here is welcome to use these books, including your people, but we're not going to prepare reports for you."

I spent the whole afternoon arguing with these guys, and I was leaving the next day for Australia for a year. That night I went home and turned on my television set. William Casey was testifying before Congress, and there was some kind of scandal or a stink about the CIA using journalists and academics. Casey got up there and testified under oath to the U.S. Congress that the CIA never uses journalists or academics, and I'd had these two guys in my office that afternoon! I turned to Jan, my wife, and said, "I'm awfully glad we're getting on the airplane tomorrow." We got on the plane and flew away from it. It was a weird sensation to go through that experience.

The CIA had contacted me once earlier, about two weeks before the guys from San Francisco came up. The Madrid chief came with one of them, and I told the guy, "I'm really concerned, because we had this guy, Jon Bilbao, and we've had a little bit of grief over the fact that there was this rumor about his involvement with the CIA."

I just had mentioned that in passing. When that guy came back—and I have no way of proving the accuracy of his statement—he said, "Oh, by the way, I looked up Bilbao in our files. We don't have him in our files, so he didn't work for us."

Now, I sell it for what I paid for it, and it could have just been sand in my eyes. I remember that during the first visit from the CIA guy when I brought up that deal about, "Well, we had this man working here at one time, and he's always had this kind of problem of having this reputation," and the agent didn't react. If I can take him at face value, the CIA didn't have a record of having had Jon Bilbao on their payroll. I knew he hadn't heard of Jon Bilbao. But of course that was earlier, so that didn't mean anything for certain.

Windmills A few times people raised the specter of, "Well, are
and wide- you guys Basque nationalists?" or, "Do you guys work
open for the Basque government?" I totally reject the idea
doors that somehow Basque nationalism exists in a
 vacuum. Basque nationalism *requires* Spanish
 nationalism and French nationalism to exist at all. It doesn't
 exist in some sort of an intellectual void. I know that there's a
 common, popular parlance in the Basque Country or in the
 Basque press, and certainly in the Spanish press, to refer to the
nacionalistas, meaning the Basque nationalists, and the *no-*

nacionalistas, the *non*-nationalists. Well, as far as I'm concerned, the *no-nacionalistas* don't exist. I think we're talking about Basque nationalists and Spanish nationalists in varying degrees. And, there's also a tendency, I think, to paint Basque nationalists with a single color or with a single coat and to dismiss them and to trivialize them. The fact of the matter is that there's a big spectrum of Basque nationalism, ranging from extreme radicalism on the part of, say, the most radicalized ETA members that are fighting for an independent Basque Country that would include the French Basque area, on the one hand, all the way to people who are mildly sympathetic to Basque nationalism but aren't even sure they're going to vote nationalist in the next election, depending on who's running and what the issues are.

Basque nationalism is a great big umbrella, just like Spanish nationalism is. There is extreme right-wing Spanish nationalism, extreme *left*-wing Spanish nationalism, even though that seems like a contradiction in terms. But, hey, the most radical branch of Basque nationalism is leftist as well. The supposed "universalism" of the left when you play it out in terms of Spanish and Basque politics doesn't seem to hold. It gets more complicated than a simple dichotomy.

Let me open that out more broadly to the criticism of the center, but from a personal standpoint. I would add that not all Spanish nationalists are anti-Basque, but there are some Spanish nationalists who are anti-Basque. I think that the anti-Basque Spanish nationalists have been waging a very effective campaign for a long time based upon disinformation.

I think that Basque nationalism has been on the defensive for a lot of years. In other words, it is constantly defending itself against a bunch of sometimes subtle rumors and sometimes blatantly false rumors or weird rumors. There's this constant "factory," if you will, that produces distortions about the whole Basque nationalist agenda, about what Eusko Jaurlaritza does, about what the Basque Nationalist Party, HB [United People in its Basque acronym], or ETA do. I think it's a very, very sophisticated campaign, and it has been organized particularly through the media and through *El País* [a Spanish news daily], in my view. The Basque government and Basque nationalism have expended an incredible amount of energy, since the death of Franco, defending themselves and trying to run around and put out little fires that have been started by political arsonists.

I view the disinformation that's put out about this place as part of that campaign. I don't think we're singled out because we're special. I just think that we're viewed as part of the problem by Spanish ultras to the extent that there's a disinformation campaign out there regarding Basque nationalism at large, and we are one of the targets. One of the reasons is because we are that little window on the world. We are an international dimension of Basque identity. I *don't* regard us as an outpost of Basque nationalism, but as I said, for Spanish ultras, even having a Basque studies program at an American university is an offense.

I'm offended by their campaign. I'm insulted by it personally. For instance, I don't think that the Basque government has to defend itself for having given this particular scholar the Lagun Onari [To a Good Friend Award], because I think that my vita speaks for itself. Had I thought that the Basque government was giving me the award because of some kind of perceived *quid pro quo* or service or some kind of direct payoff for having done things for them, I would not have accepted the Lagun Onari Award. For somebody to suggest otherwise is a personal and professional insult to me, and it irritates me.

However, the other thing that I would say is that when newspapers in the Basque Country or in Madrid, *El País* and others, publish articles about this center without calling me or calling Zulaika and asking us, that's terrible journalism. I mean, they can call, and we can say, "No comment," or, "No, it's not true," and then they can put in the article, "No comment," or, "We called the center in Reno, and, of course, they denied the accusation." But they don't even bother to call us, so to me that's terrible journalism. I find that to be a cowardly act and shoddy journalism.

If I was going to write an article attacking the University of Nevada, you'd think I would call some people at the University of Nevada and say, "You know, I'm very upset about this, that, and the other thing, and it's my belief that you guys are doing the following. Is it true?" I mean, at least give your target the opportunity to comment if you're a journalist. You just don't write articles about people that are essentially libelous without checking your sources and including your target. That's what a good journalist does. So it's bad journalism, and it's cowardly.

I'd heard about some articles [e.g., Gloria Castresana publicly criticized the center for being an instrumental part of a Basque nationalist agenda], suggesting that somehow or other we were

linked up with ETA or maybe we were getting funding from ETA. This whole thing about ETA is very recent, and it's just a smear campaign.

In the case of Gloria Castresana, it's a personal vendetta. She worries me least of all of these people, because she's essentially paranoid about this place. She thinks that all we do is get up in the morning and think of ways to hurt her, which is preposterous. I think we give her a thought once every ten years, and usually it's in reaction to something like what she did in Bilbao. I think that maybe in a way we have offended her with the biggest insult possible, which is to ignore her. But anyway, my point is that Gloria was a kind of an aberrational thing, to my mind.²⁴

The fact of the matter is the more successes that the center has, the more stuff that it does, the more importance that it acquires, and the more coverage it gets in international media, in the Spanish national media, in the Basque media, and so on, the more vulnerable it becomes to smear campaigns and innuendos and accusations. The more contribution this place makes, the more it's going to irritate the ultra-nationalists on the Spanish side. In fact, I've had death threats; I've had various things over the years from that sector, but what can you do about it? I've had anonymous thises and thats and profanity directed at me over the telephone for even *deeming* to have something like this program.

I know Zulaika sometimes gets upset and very concerned about that image issue, and it is of concern. He wants to counter that and contest it, and my advice to him is always, "Forget it. Put it out of your mind, because you can't win. They want you to waste a lot of time and energy trying to tilt with windmills. They build these little windmills, these lies out there, and you can waste a lot of your time and energy attacking the windmills. So why are you going to bother? You're not going to change their minds and their agenda, and the readership is probably pretty much decided one way or the other, too. You're not going to change a lot of minds there either."

It's not a concern that has bothered me a lot over the years. As I said, you can't really persuade people who don't want to be persuaded, so why waste your time? There are always going to be people out there that are going to view us as the CIA, the American government, the Basque government, or ETA, which

is really a joke. It's pretty hard to be a pawn of the Basque government and also be a pawn of ETA simultaneously, but apparently people are prepared to believe that. It's preposterous, but when it concerns Reno, I guess they could merge the two in their minds.

What I'm getting back to is that I've always said you can never prove a negative or disprove a negative. You can't prove you're not in the CIA, you can't prove you're not getting clandestine support from the Basque government or the American Government. You could prove it if you were and you wanted to go public with it. You can prove affirmatives. I mean, if somebody accuses you of being a bastard, how do you prove that you're not a bastard? So that's a real tricky deal. I always said to the staff, "You've got to ignore it, because if you let it, it'll drive you crazy, and they win."

I can also understand why people that want to view us as an extension of ETA or the Basque government or the PNV or the CIA are going to believe it no matter what we say. I think that interpreting us that way makes perfect sense within the logic of their personal universe, and it's pretty hard to shake a person's fundamental logic. If I were a Spanish nationalist in Madrid, or if I were Jaime Mayor Oreja [a Spanish nationalist] for instance, who sees Basque culture as totally politicized at every level, an operation like this abroad festers, rankles.

I will say categorically, and I can say this, we've *never, ever*, in the thirty-three years that I was in charge of this place, once received five cents from ETA. I've never once received support from the Basque government until very recently. But we didn't say, "Give us \$40,000 a year for operating, and then we'll do whatever you say."

The Basque government has only called me once. I had one call, one time from Josu Legarreta saying that he was having problems getting responses from Boise and San Francisco to a request for proposals that the Basque government had put out to the diaspora. I guess he'd given them some money, and the reports weren't coming in in a timely fashion. Josu asked me if I would be willing to make some phone calls for him and see what was happening, because he wasn't getting anywhere, and he was concerned. He wanted to get me involved in that, but that was more at the level of a personal favor.

I pretty much told him, "Josu, I don't have any more leverage over Boise and San Francisco than you do." That was pretty much my reaction, I'm sure. But I think I made a call or two. If that's working for the Basque government, I guess in that particular case I did, but all I was trying to do was just underscore to Boise and San Francisco that they probably ought to send in some kind of report or get back in touch with Josu. That's about it, and that in thirty-three years!

Another thing I would say about this place is that we always had the door open to anybody and everybody. We've never once turned down a visitor, nor did we ever make it a condition of employment here that your "politics" be right. I mean, we had Maguna, who, as I say, was probably a Spanish nationalist or ex-Carlist. Eloy Placer was certainly a Basque nationalist in sentiment, and Jon Bilbao was profoundly PNV—profoundly.



"We always had the door open to anybody and everybody. We've never once turned down a visitor, nor did we ever make it a condition of employment here that your 'politics' be right." Basque politicians visit the Basque Studies Program in 1985 as part of a U.S. State Department tour. Back row, left to right: Mario Onaindia, Jaime Mayor Oreja, Joe Crowley, Joy Crowley, unidentified. Front row: both unidentified.

President Ardanza came to Reno, and Xabier Arzallus visited the program for two or three days, but I wasn't in Reno. Txillardegui [aka Jose Luis Alvarez Enparantza], who was one of the founders of ETA, also came here. (This was well after he was out of ETA, and he was an academic.) Mario Onaindia, from EE [Basque Left in its Basque acronym], came with Jaime Mayor Oreja, who is very anti-Basque nationalist, a very strong Spanish nationalist, and a leader of PP [Popular Party in its Spanish acronym].

So my point is that we've never, ever, ever, to my knowledge, discriminated against anybody for their politics. There were a lot of people who came through the program that I couldn't tell about their politics, and their politics are none of my business. But we had a procession of journalists and political figures. Of course with the political figures always kind of knew their politics, because you'd get a CV in advance, and if you were a socialist member of the Spanish Parliament, Mario Onaindia, Jaime Mayor Oreja, or Arzallus, that said something about your politics, right? But we didn't invite them because of their politics *ever*. Most of the visitors that came here came of their own initiative, most likely through a U.S. Department of State program.

I don't even understand all the details, but that program pretty much tries to introduce the United States to foreign journalists and politicians. Those are the two categories that turn up in this program. And if you qualify—and I don't know how you do it, whether you apply to the American Embassy in Madrid, or whether they put out a call for proposals, or whatever—but you can say, "I am the editor of *El Mundo* [a Spanish newspaper], and I am very interested in going to the United States to see how the United States conducts counter-terrorism and also how bilingual education works in the United States."

You write a little proposal, I think, and then you send it in, and if they say, "Well, yes, this guy is pretty interesting," then they usually try to pair you up—sometimes you come by yourself—with a couple of other people. They might put you together with, say, a member of the Basque Parliament and maybe a member of the Spanish Parliament that also wanted to come. So that's how you get a Mario Onaindia and a Mayor Oreja in the same visit.

Then you'd pick your agenda. Maybe there's some program that one of you wants to visit in Oklahoma, and maybe there's another program that somebody wants to visit in Florida, and then

maybe one or more of the people say the Center for Basque Studies in Reno, because they're curious. They fly you over, and they give you an interpreter, and you go to Oklahoma, Florida, Reno, and UCLA or Los Angeles. And it's fairly fast—a week, ten days, something like that. We've had a lot of visitations, probably as many as a fifty people, who have come through here in that capacity.

I remember one time we had a journalist from Nigeria that somehow or other heard about the Basque Studies Program, and he had some interest because of ethnic diversity in Nigeria. We hosted him, and he was a nice guy. That's the main door through which our casual foreign visitors entered.

They had this one Cuban guy who was frequently an interpreter for the State Department, particularly whenever they were having Spanish speakers. He came here so often that he got to be kind of a friend. As soon as he would come, he would deposit his guests, and he would say, "Well, I know you don't need me now. I'll see you in two days." And he'd hang out. He'd go downtown and go to casinos, or I don't know what he did. But he knew that we didn't need an interpreter, and he just stayed out of the way. He understood that it would just slow everything down if he tried to do his job, which was to interpret, because we could all handle the Spanish language.

We also started the summer stipends, where we devoted a little bit of money—we give out \$1,000 to two or three people to come and use the library—and we did it over at the Basque University. And I started to get this entire backlash, because the Basque University is very politicized. We would invite proposals, and you had to propose some kind of a project, some serious reason for coming here. Then the staff would all get together, and we'd all read the proposals. "Well, this one sounds good, that one sounds good." I mean, the person had to have reasonable credentials, and we'd see the credentials, but we certainly didn't care about their politics. We didn't care if they were PP or whether they were HB.

Then I'd go back to the Basque Country, and I'd be knocking around with some of my friends, and they'd say, "How could you have given a grant to so and so? Don't you know that she's HB or he's PP?"

And I always used to try and explain, "We're not running a political operation over there, we're running an academic operation, and they happened to submit one of the better projects." And that's the only criterion we have!

I very seldom have ever talked politics with any of my colleagues. Jon Bilbao and I very, very seldom discussed Basque nationalism or even current events over there. I mean, it's not as though we *never* did, but it just wasn't a burning topic for us. Same with Zulaika; I don't discuss politics with him that much. Obviously, after the March 11th bombings in Madrid we talked politics, or when we're sitting down writing together about terrorism, which we've published some about. Even then, though, we're talking mainly about international issues or issues in countries other than Spain or the Basque Country or France.

We were doing our deal, because really, in terms of the whole big, broad spectrum of what's going on, the discourse that passes under the rubric of terrorism these days, the Basque Country is a pretty small deal compared to Palestine or Iraq, for God's sakes, or Afghanistan or Al-Qaeda. It pales in comparison. The fact that ETA, say, threatened to blow off a couple of bombs outside the Olympic stadium in Barcelona to demonstrate that they're still around is pretty small stuff in the big picture these days.

In fact, Zulaika's and my whole focus on terrorism includes a little Basque dimension, and we could have developed our whole discourse on terrorism and counter-terrorism without ever mentioning the Basque case once. The extent to which we mentioned the Basques was because a couple of University of Chicago Press readers, who were reviewing the manuscript, *Terror and Taboo*, were saying, "Well, these two guys are Basque specialists. They should put more Basque stuff in here."

So we actually rewrote the manuscript and included a few things from our Basque experience and our own backgrounds, which weren't even in the first draft. We added that chapter where we talked about ETA at the end, and I put in a little bit about my experiences as an anthropologist back in the 1960s. But even then we were kind of resisting the idea, because we weren't writing a Basque book. It certainly was not a book about ETA.

Ethnicity: We are committed to the notion that there is such
The Old a thing as Basque ethnicity, and I would come back
Law to how that gets defined and where. But if we didn't
believe in that, we should turn out the lights and
go home. How can you have a Basque studies program or a center
for Basque studies that is premised upon the idea that there is

absolutely no distinction between Basques and anybody else? I mean, then what do you do? Why would it even make sense?

Particularly as an anthropologist, I am committed to the idea. I see distinctions, even ethnic distinctions, within the broader American population, and I'm not talking about divides such as with Hispanics or divides such as with blacks in American society. I'm saying that within *white* America you can make certain "ethnic distinctions." So I don't have a problem with that.

I understand that some people would like to pretend that race and ethnicity do not matter. I think they do matter. I think they drive a whole lot of issues within American politics today despite the universalist dialogue or discourse, and certainly internationally that is absolutely true as well. I think that some people, who happen to live somewhere in Iberia, would like to pretend that there is no such thing as ethnic distinctions within Iberia, but then why have the Spain of the regions or the autonomies? Why waste all of the energy that gets spent upon the various minority languages within Spain? Why tout diversity in your tourist literature?

The Spanish national tourism thrust in part elevates the distinctiveness of the Basques, the distinctiveness of the Catalans, and the distinctiveness of the Andalusians. They don't just say, "Come visit Spain because all of the women wear a flower in their hair, and we don't play the castanets anymore, and there's no such thing as bull fights. We're thinking of outlawing them."

I mean, the point is that the Spanish *national* imagery projected to the outside is very ethnically and culturally diverse. So it might be nice for "Spaniards" to sit around and say, "Well, there's absolutely no distinction amongst us," but I think that that's more of an exercise in wishful thinking by intellectuals.

I think that there's a little, thin, liberal layer, just like in this country, that would like to pretend that there's no such thing as religious fundamentalism or racism or anything else, that we're all just good little Americans irrespective of color, class, educational background, and regional origin. That's a lovely, beautiful discourse maybe, and it's totally utopian, but it doesn't correspond to any kind of reality other than what goes on in a few coffee houses in New York and San Francisco and at some university campuses among some segments of the faculty and student body. But that's about how deep its roots are. That kind of discourse in America is miles wide and three inches deep.

I think that they've got a comparable kind of thing going down in Iberia, and maybe even worse, because here we wiped out our ethnic homelands. We pretty much hammered the American Indians, took over their land, and put them on reservations. Maybe the Navajos and the Hopi and Zuni are a bit of an exception. So we got rid of the ethnic homeland issue here very effectively out of the barrel of a gun. In Iberia that's not the case.

Then you start the segue into the differences between what does identity and ethnicity mean in the United States, say, versus in Europe. I would totally agree, for one thing, that having once pretty much liquidated our Native American populations and certainly marginalized them as any kind of a serious political entity, except maybe in the casino business, that what we are is a nation of immigrants. We are a nation basically of sub-strata of European immigrants of various kinds with a whole very complicated history, including intra-group tensions and accommodations and violence even.

We've got this kind of white American sub-stratum and the whole black slave dimension that was brought in. Then we have the big Hispanic and Asian deals. In other words, we have the new immigration, if you will, that pretty much postdates—not entirely—the white European period; that is pretty much a late nineteenth and twentieth-century phenomenon for us, whereas the white thing goes back to the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

So we've got *all* those elements in play, but in the final analysis, there is a huge amount of construction of identity that goes on. And then you throw in all of the intermarriage. We've had this racial divide, and all of that is driving our history in various ways.

It really doesn't have an analogy. I guess the closest thing to an analogy in Iberia—and it's certainly not of the same magnitude—might be the gypsy issue or maybe now the African immigration issue today, but that's brand new in Iberia. In the United States, this dimension is several centuries old now.

We have this wonderful exercise in the U.S. Census now where Americans are able to identify themselves ethnically to the census taker, and you can list, I think, up to three ethnic origins or none. You can say, "I'm an American," or you can say, "I'm Irish, Italian, and Chinese." Then they count the categories,

and that's how we get to this number of about 50,000 Basques now in the United States. It's not that 50,000 people check the box, because it's a sample thing still, I think. (Initially, it was a sample, one in five or something like that, and then they would extrapolate and get 10,000 people saying "Basque," and then they'd say, "Well, there are 50,000." And I'm rounding that off, because those numbers don't end in zero.)

The point is that Americans go through a very, very different kind of exercise vis-à-vis the census taker regarding identity. I doubt if they even *census* identity in Spain, whether they even have an ethnic identity question, or if they do, they don't mean whites. In other words, Basques and Catalans aren't asked, "Are you Catalan, or are you Basque?" but maybe today you get asked if you're a Moroccan or if you're a sub-Saharan African. You might! I'm not sure how that works.

After five centuries of centralizing forces, still you've got an ethnic homeland that's called Catalonia, and you've got an ethnic homeland called *Euskadi* or *Euskal Herria* [the Basque Country], and you've got an ethnic homeland called Galiza or Galicia. The same is true even in the biggest single centralizing juggernaut and ethnically leveling playing field in the world, arguably, which is France. The French are still choking a little bit on the Corsicans, the Bretons, and the Basques. And now in France you've got the process of creation of new ethnic identities going on all the time. Now they've got this huge Muslim population. I think France has the largest one in Europe now.

These issues are never static. So when we talk about identity formation, the idea that somehow it's all going away, I think, is wishful thinking. If anything, I think that it's possible to discern right across the planet at least as many particularistic forces at play as there are universalistic ones. Whether it's religious fundamentalisms, or whether it's ethnic identity formation and/or ethno-nationalism, you've got all of these incredibly strong forces that have pretty much absorbed or outlasted the Enlightenment attempt to wipe it all out.

If you want to talk about failures regarding the issue of identity and ethnicity, the real failure is the failure of the Enlightenment enterprise and its pandering to universalism. It just hasn't worked! If it had worked, internationalism would be a lot stronger today than it is, and it would not be as assailed as it is. What we basically have is a United Nations that is virtually powerless and that is

more symbolic in show than it is substance. And if, in fact, the Enlightenment project had succeeded, we'd be living in a very different world today than we live in, in my view.

Is it ridiculous to have a Basque studies program? The one thing I will say is that I guess by our very existence, from some people's standpoint, we are a Basque nationalist enterprise, because we deign to recognize Basque ethnic distinctness and argue for it and study it. So to the extent that that's a political act, I guess we're a nationalist operation. But I can promise we're not a PNV operation or an HB operation, we're not a PP operation or a PSOE [the Spanish Socialist Workers Party in its Spanish acronym] operation either. We're none of the above, and hopefully, it will always be true. I would deny that we have a specific nationalist agenda at the center.

Goio Monreal and I brought out a book, *The Old Law of Bizkaia*, in 2005. (Well it's Goio's book, but Goio, Linda, and I collaborated—Linda and I as translators and Goio as the compiler and editor.) *The Old Law of Bizkaia* is a canonical political text in the sense that it is probably the most canonical text underpinning Basque nationalism.

But we are not bringing it out to underpin Basque nationalism. The Diputación of Bizkaia [the Council of the Province of Bizkaia] is subsidizing that book, and the Basque government is not supporting it. We approached the Bizkaian government with a proposal saying, "We want to start a Classic Series at the Center for Basque Studies, and we're asking you for support for the first of four books of this series," amongst which happens to be *The Old Law of Bizkaia*.

One of the first four titles that we were considering was Goio's *Old Law of Bizkaia*, because it's so canonical, and it's virtually unknown in Spain, let alone outside Spain. We also wanted to do something on José Miguel de Barandiaran, on Koldo Mitxelena, and on the Basque language apologists. [*Anthology of Apologists and Detractors of the Basque Language* was published in 2006.] Those books seem like four very, very obvious texts to do under the rubric of Basque classics.

We did *The Old Law of Bizkaia* first, because we thought it would be the easiest. I'm not so sure we were right, but we thought it was going to be the easiest, mainly because Goio and Linda had worked together on a pretty much finished translation, and Goio thought he was going to write a 40-page essay situating

the book. But the translation needed work, and we had to go back and revisit it and do a lot to it, and Goio wrote about 180 pages, and then I wrote a preface. So the whole thing grew, and I'm not so sure that one of the other subjects might not have come out faster, but we believed that we could get Goio's book to the market quickly.

It turns out that that was the first publication sponsored by the government of Bizkaia. Even the scheduling of it was accidental. I'm sure, though, that some people over there will take a look at the chronology and say, "Oh well, these guys went to the Diputación of Bizkaia and said, 'You give us some money, and we'll publish the *Old Law*, and that will be our first priority.'" It's just not true! But if you want to believe it is true, I can't convince you otherwise.

Reflections on my career

There are parts of my career that have nothing or have little to do with Basque studies. I've worked on tourism in Las Vegas, on Italian immigration, and on Italian family history research. I guest-edited an issue on Iberia for the *Journal of Family History*, which is the major journal in its field, and I wrote an article in there on the Basque stem family. I also got interested in borderland studies. One of my publications was about the frontier influence of how being situated next to the border and sharing an international frontier or a border as part of the municipal bounds affected people in Echalar. It was an interest that I maintained and revisit periodically. I have probably published four or five articles sprinkled over twenty-five years on the influence of frontiers on those living near them. I also worked on the subject of terrorism without it being a specifically Basque orientation, although some Basque stuff creeps in.

I guess in terms of balance my published articles are more important than the books, but they're virtually impossible to talk about, because there are so many and they're on such a wide range of topics. But collectively, or taken altogether, they probably weigh more than the books. Nevertheless, I think there's also a way in which you become more known for a book than for a particular article, unless your article happens to be so completely path-breaking that it revolutionizes a particular

academic field. Once in a while that happens with an article, but books are a little more prominent.

For example, *Death in Murélag*a grew out of the idea that I had for an MA thesis, and which actually, in a lot of ways, turned out to be almost my most influential publication. I mean, it's kind of a joke, ironic in a way.

It had a fair bit of impact in the Basque Country. There was no anthropology in those days in the Basque Country to speak of. There really wasn't a *field* called anthropology. But *Death in Murélag*a was a book that was read widely, and I've only come to appreciate that in recent years. Bernardo Atxaga read it and loved it—it was one of his favorite books when he was young—and Angel Lertxundi told me the same thing. These were people who, in the whole generation of Basque writers, read that book and commented on it. Somebody told me that there was a discussion group of Catholic-action people around the cathedral of Bilbao that kind of used to meet clandestinely in the church. They assigned that book when it came out, and they all discussed it!

Now the book just got republished in the Basque Country, and there were a lot of people who came out of the woodwork and told me, "I read your book thirty years ago, and it really influenced me."

Most of my books don't get read that widely, and I'm surprised, because these are not anthropologists that are saying this. Most of those readers are total laymen.

I went off on a bunch of tangents for years, and finally Jon Bilbao and I did *Amerikanuak*. I would have to say that far and away the most successful book that I published regarding Basques was *Death in Murélag*a, and far and away the most successful book that I published dealing with Basque immigration would be *Amerikanuak*, so I guess those would be two real high points in my career. I think that *Amerikanuak* had a lot of influence, maybe even too much influence. There's a way in which it defined a field and then limited it, in my view, in the sense that it was canonical in a way. I mean, it provided a baseline for studies of Basque immigration in the New World, and it influenced a lot of people's work. It's pretty hard for anybody to publish in that area without citing it, and so that, I guess, makes it canonical.

I think that there's a way in which the book casts too long of a shadow, and both Jon Bilbao and I kind of felt that people were not crawling out from under the shadow enough in the

sense that we never viewed *Amerikanuak* as definitive. We understood, having written *Amerikanuak*, what an immense topic we had taken on, and we certainly didn't presume to have covered it exhaustively. I think we covered a lot of the broad outlines and then provided a good, broad framework for people to fall back on for framing their own research. But there's a way in which I think a lot of people who followed us were too timid or too intimidated by *Amerikanuak* to break out of the mold or to take bigger risks. I'm a little ambivalent about its legacy. I think in one sense it made a big contribution, and I think in another sense it also inhibited some people.

Pretty much after we finished *Amerikanuak*, I thought, "What am I going to do next in the Basque area?"

So I did *Beltran*, which was an oral history of Beltran Paris, a Basque sheepman in eastern Nevada. That book kind of grew out of the interviews that I conducted the first summer, running around to the Basque festivals. I went to Ely announcing the program, and I met Beltran. I found him to be pretty extraordinary, and we just had a little bit of an exchange at the festival. So I said, "Look, can I come out to your ranch tomorrow and sit down with you with a tape recorder?" I did that and taped him for maybe an hour or something.

Ely was the first festival I visited, so I had no frame of reference. I had nothing to compare it to. But I wanted to interview some elderly Basques, like sheepherders, just to get a feel for it. I knew one of the things, maybe the core or highest priority for the new program, would be to research the Basque presence in the American West. That's pretty much why DRI had started the program, and I was trying to get my feet wet, because I didn't know that much about the subject.

One day years later I started listening to some of those old tapes, and I listened to the Beltran tape, and I was struck by the fact that his life was so emblematic of the whole Basque immigrant experience and sheepherding. He was a sheepherder, then he was a camp tender, and then he was on his own. He was a tramp sheepman, and then he got some land, and then he became a sheep rancher. His life was all within the same industry, and he became kind of a patriarch out in the Butte Valley in eastern Nevada. I thought, "I don't even know if the man is still alive." This would have been maybe six, seven years after the first interview.

I called out to the Ely Hotel, which was a Basque hotel, and the proprietor was a Basque woman named Mariana or Marianne. I talked to her several times over the years, because anytime I went through Ely, I stayed at the hotel, so I knew her. I said, "Mariana, is Bert Paris—because his Anglicized name was Bert—still alive?"

She answered, "Oh, yes, yes. Doesn't come to town as much as he used to. He's getting older, but, yes, he's alive. I know I saw him not long ago."

So I contacted the Paris family and asked if I could come out and sit down and talk to them. That's when I drove out to the ranch and told them about my interest in possibly doing an oral history. The family decided to do it, and I told them that it would affect all of them. I also told them that my only condition would be that I'd let them read it at the end, but if they wanted to censor it, I would not permit that.

In other words, I had to have freedom, and I said, "It's not just going to be all laudatory and praiseful. We've got to talk about the warts. We've got to talk about life, really, life as it was really lived and not glorified. If you all are uncomfortable with the final product, the deal would be that we'll just stick it in a box at the university under lock and key, not to be opened for fifty years, and we'll all be gone." They agreed to that, and so we went forward.

That resulted in the *Beltran* book, and actually it took a long time, and it was very, very hard to write. It was a difficult, difficult project in a lot of ways, even though the book looks quite simple. But my hardest challenge or my greatest difficulty was the voice, whether to frame it in first person or third person. I framed it in first person, but once I did that, then I had the problem of his English. If I ran it through my filter and made it academic and in perfectly acceptable English, it didn't ring true to me, because it wasn't Grandpa.

Then I tried a version in which I stuck totally with his bad English, and it was horrible. Five pages into it, the reader would have thrown the book against the wall and said, "I'm not going to read this! It's too hard." So I shut myself away on the Oregon coast for a couple of weeks and just listened to the tapes. By then I had dozens if not hundreds of hours of tape with him, and just listened and listened and listened until I could almost put myself into his linguistic frame, and then I wrote it. I wrote

it in a sort of quaint or nonacademic English that I hope preserved the flavor of his English, but without being too off-putting or pedantic or redundant.

I got involved in doing a comparative study. At one point I decided I wanted to go to Italy to study emigration from a southern Italian town. I ended up in Italy in 1972, and while there I ran across people that knew people from Murélaga in North Queensland. In other words, they were returned sugarcane cutters in the Abruzzo in Molise in the town of Agnone. They had cut sugarcane in North Queensland, and they knew some Basques in North Queensland. It's a small world, you know?

In Murélaga I lived with the Goitiandia family for about a year. The name of the *caserío* [farmstead] was Goitiandia as well. I knew that Basques had gone down under, because Goitiandia's youngest daughter, Beatriz, married an "Australian" named Josu. He was from Gernika, and he was back from having been a sugarcane cutter. There were several men in Murélaga who had been to Australia and cut sugarcane out there. So I had some information from those guys about Australia, and also from Josu, because I interviewed him about what it was like to be a sugarcane cutter in Australia, thinking that one day I might write about that, but from the perspective of Basques exclusively.

I thought, "Well, maybe I could go to Queensland and do a field study of sugarcane cutters, Basque and Italian, and see if there's a difference in some of their adaptive life strategies." But I knew that there were no more sugarcane cutters in Australia, because by the 1970s or early 1980s the industry had already been mechanized about ten years earlier. It wasn't that long before that there had been sugarcane cutters, and I didn't know whether I could find enough of these people to do a study. I thought, "Maybe I can locate enough people and reconstruct all of that, but maybe not."

I went to Australia for a couple of months in 1977, knocked around, met quite a few Australian Basques, and got involved with the Gure Txoko Basque Club in Sydney. There were a bunch of ex-cane cutters down there, so I interviewed them. I went up to North Queensland, got to know the Mendiola family almost immediately, because they were from Murélaga. In fact, they were from a fallen-down *baserri* right in front of Goitiandia's. They were in their forties. Their mother and father had emigrated to Australia because the family had had some serious illness back

in Murélagua and three or four young children died in that farm, and the village doctor told them they had to move to a warmer climate. So that's why they went to Australia. But anyway, I got to know some people, and it was obvious to me that there was enough material to warrant going out there, and so I did.

Jan, my wife, and I went out, and we lived for pretty much a year in Australia in 1980, really as nomads. I bought a secondhand taxicab, and it was a station wagon from Sydney. We loaded everything in the car and drove up to Queensland, and before the year was out, I think we put about 25,000 miles on that car just up and back and all around. We made it out almost to Adelaide and to Griffith, which was an agricultural district that some Basques had moved down to, and the mining town of Mount Isa, too. I came back and published an article or two in English out of that work, but my monograph came out in Spanish [*Azúcar Amargo: Vida y Fortuna de los Cortadores de Caña Italianos y Vascos en la Australia Tropical—Bitter Sugar: Life and Fortune of Italian and Basque Sugarcane Cutters in Tropical Australia*].

Alfonso Pérez-Agote had a series with the University of the Basque Country Press, and Alfonso asked if I would be willing to publish it there, and I did in 1996. To this day I've never gotten around to publishing my Australian research in English in monograph form, although I'm working on it right now.

In the meantime I met Richard Lane who was running around the American West. He had done a PhD dissertation for Yale University in Elko and Elko County, but he was really into photography. As it turned out he was always ambivalent about being an academic, but he got his doctorate. He was at the University of Idaho in Moscow teaching as an anthropologist for a while and pretty much hated it. Basically he walked away from his academic career, and he was tenure track, or he may have even had tenure by then, I don't know. He wanted to be a photographer. Richard came to Reno, and we gave him a little bit of money, not much, to organize our slide collection and to also organize his slide collection with the idea being that we would get a copy of each of his slides and that we'd have some rights to use them. (He was living really hand-to-mouth, and he was a bachelor with very modest wants.) He and I ended up collaborating on a book on Basque sheepherders in the American West, which is a photo book, but I wrote the text for it.

I got involved in Basque nationalism, too, and I keep coming back to that subject. [laughter] When I was doing field research in Murélaga, the parish priest, Don Emilio, was a very, very strong Basque nationalist, a PNV guy. He was a hard-liner in his own way but totally PNV and pretty uncomfortable with ETA. At the time, Xabier Amuritza came out of the seminary, and his first posting as a priest was in Gisaburuaga parish, which is practically a *barrio* [neighborhood] of Murélaga. So I got to know Xabier well, and I also knew Alberto Gabikagojeaskoa, who was a pretty hard-line, young Basque priest with a parish over by Gernika.

Xabier and Alberto were really pushing the envelope in terms of challenging the bishop and challenging the authorities over what they perceived to be Basque cultural genocide. They got into a lot of legal difficulty. They were tried, and they ultimately both ended up in prison after a hunger strike at the bishop's house. I think it's fair to say that Xabier and Alberto were less uncomfortable with ETA than was Don Emilio.

Their whole generation of priests, because they were younger, was fairly closely identified with ETA and was condoning the initial phases of the violence. I think that a lot of priests parted ways with ETA over time, but not all. Some stayed strong supporters of ETA, but I think that as the conflict became bloodier, a lot of priests fell by the wayside. But I'm talking about very early on. ETA started in 1959, and I'm talking about the mid 1960s. Nobody had died yet. So we're talking about a very different ETA, and we're talking about a very different phase of the conflict.

Don Emilio basically proselytized me in the sense that he was constantly trying to convince me of the merits of Basque nationalism. He was my mentor, if you will, in the subject of Basque nationalism, and he was an interesting guy. He'd been a chaplain in the Basque Army, and he spent three or four years in prison camp, as a prisoner of war, and was afraid he was going to get executed at one point. Then when he was turned out and finally released, he was driven out of his hometown, Lekeitio, by the mayor. He finally got posted to a little, dinky town in Álava. His career had suffered mightily because of the conflict and because he was a Basque nationalist. But he was very avid, a very bright guy, very intelligent, widely read, and a nice guy.

Don Emilio revved my motor, and at that time, I've got to say, I think probably part of my personal decision to come to

Reno to take the position was driven by Don Emilio's influence over me. I could have just gone off and been an anthropologist somewhere else, but to come and build a Basque studies program, in a way to me it was like *my* contribution to keeping the flame alive of a very, very repressed culture, in my perception at the time.

I think over the years my personal commitment to that aspect of Basque nationalism, and I'm talking about a personal thing now, is probably still there today. I mean, I'm sympathetic to it. As an anthropologist I'm certainly at least empathetic to it, but I think that there are ways in which I'm less prepossessed with it. I don't think I was ever "radical" radical. I'm less concerned with it today than I was then, but that was my personal introduction to Basque nationalism.

At some point a guy named Milton DaSilva came through Reno, and he was a graduate student at some university back East, maybe Brandeis. Milton was doing a dissertation in political science on Basque nationalism, and he would ask me questions. What I knew about Basque nationalism I had learned at Don Emilio's kitchen table or in a bar. I hadn't really read a book yet about Basque nationalism. (Actually there weren't very many books on the subject at the time.) It wasn't a big, burning thing for me, and I certainly didn't possess specific expertise in Basque nationalism. I'd interviewed a few people as an anthropologist when I was doing my general ethnographic work, but it just wasn't a huge part of my concern when I was doing field research in the Basque Country.

DaSilva had suggested maybe someday we could write something together. Then I got an invitation from Oriol Pi-Sunyer, who was a Catalan-American anthropologist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and who had worked in Catalonia, to go to Ontario and give a paper on Basque ethno-nationalism. I contacted DaSilva, and I said, "I've got this invitation, and I really don't feel comfortable with doing it on my own. I have not read the literature that you've read, and I certainly haven't read the literature on ethno-nationalism generally. So, do you want to collaborate on this thing?"

We did, and it ultimately got kind of desktop published by Oriol in 1971. There are four or five papers in a collection, and ours is one of them. That was my first real formal or academic brush with the subject of Basque nationalism.

Then I guess it would have been about 1987 or so, they had the Second World Congress of Basque Studies that went on for weeks and weeks. Alfonso Pérez-Agote, whom I didn't know at all—I'd never met him at that point—got in touch with me. He wanted me to be part of a session on the sociology of nationalism. I wrote him back and said, "I'm sorry. I don't know anything about the subject. Thanks for the invitation, but I really don't know anything about it."

But Alfonso insisted, and I forget how he convinced me, but he did. All of a sudden I was going to go to this conference on the sociology of nationalism, and I did a kind of a crash course. I started reading Anthony Smith and Walker Connor, because I didn't know their work really. I knew a couple of Walker Connor's articles, and I sort of knew that he had launched the field of ethno-nationalist studies in America after World War II. But then I had to get serious because I was going to go to this conference, and there were some heavy hitters like Michael Hechter and Walker Connor.

That forced me to really get into the subject of ethno-nationalism. I wrote a paper, and I gave it at the conference, and Walker Connor liked it a lot. He and I got to be very close friends at that conference, which is a friendship that continues to this day. He then encouraged me to submit my paper from the conference to *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, a journal edited by Anthony Smith in London. I did, Walker supported it, and they published my paper. So I was *mojado* [wet] in the subject of ethno-nationalism.

Then Alfonso invited me to come to the University of the Basque Country campus of Leioa to give a short course on the subject of identity. That forced me to read Stuart Hall and people like that—people that I hadn't read. So Alfonso really was a huge stimulus for me, mainly by prodding me from behind rather than pulling me forward. It was more like he would get me involved in a commitment that would force me to break some new ground for my own work, which I appreciate in retrospect, although at the time I was ambivalent about boning up on the subject that he wanted me to expound on.

Gurutz Jáuregui visited Reno, and we wanted to have Gurutz's book, *The Decline of the Nation-State*, published at the University of Nevada Press in translation, and we couldn't find a translator.

So I agreed to translate the book, and that kind of got me more into the subject of nationalism.

Then I decided at some point to recruit one of Alfonso's books on the subject of nationalism as a possible candidate for translation, except that as we got into it, I said to him, "Alfonso, what we should do is a synthetic kind of work. I mean, rather than picking one of your books and translating it, why don't you do an overview of your own work on the subject?" He did, and it came out in spring 2006, in the Basque Book Series [*The Social Roots of Basque Nationalism*]. Cameron Watson did the initial translation, then I spent a lot of time translating, doing some polishing of the translation, and editing.

At one point Joseba Zulaika and I wrote an article together on ETA as a concept rather than as a structure. We published it in a pretty important and well-respected journal in the Anglo world called *Comparative Studies in Society and History* in 1990. That led us to *Terror and Taboo*, which has a certain Basque dimension, but it was not intended to be a Basque book or about nationalism per se. But obviously nationalism comes into it, because we're talking about the IRA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and about ETA, and there's an ethno-nationalist dimension to all of those conflicts.

Terror and Taboo is a book that I really identify with. As an American citizen, it contains and reflects a lot of my own personal political frustrations, and as someone who, like all of us, is inundated by terrorism and counter-terrorism discourse and who's pretty skeptical about it. So that was a kind of *cri de coeur* book. The other day I was reading the epilogue, and it was scary. I mean, I hadn't looked at it for a long time. In the epilogue of that book we predicted everything that's happened after 9/11. It's a little bit dated, but we pretty much predicted that America would become the promised land of counter-terrorism if we kept going down the path we were going down. Indeed, it's all been borne out, in fact, even more so. We thought we were being hyperbolic at the time, and we weren't being adventuresome enough, really. We thought we had almost crossed the line then. But here we are, and it's eerie. I was kind of nervous when I was done reading that epilogue.

Nationalism is a subject that I never really went out and embraced in some systematic way, but I guess if you're a social scientist and you're interested in things Basque, you can't get

away from the subject in some respects. So some of my vitae would provide *prima facie* evidence to anybody that wants to say that, "Well, Douglass is just interested in, or he's just a kind of a spokesman for, Basque nationalism."

Then, political scientist Pedro Ibarra and I wrote about the subject more recently in the conference that was held at the center [titled *Nationalism, Globalization, and Terror* and held in April 2002]. It's a subject that never quite goes away from me at this point, but it's never my mainstream interest.

One of the things that happens to you as an academic, particularly if you're as eclectic as I've been I used to think I'd publish an article and close a book. But by publishing about a subject, you don't close a book, you *open* the book. Your article gets published, and then somebody is organizing a conference, and they know about your article, so they invite you to come to the conference. Then you've got to go back and revisit the topic and prepare something different, and I've never been good at just regurgitating old stuff or rewriting the same old paper for the next conference, because I find that boring. So I always kind of roll up my sleeves and try to do something different each time, but that's not always possible.

I naïvely thought that I could go off and fool around with Italian studies a little bit and maybe write a book and then drop it. Well, you can't really drop it, because then all the Italianists know about you. Family history is another thing. I've been pulled into some controversies, into a bunch of stuff in the field of family history generally, and I didn't even get into that through my Basque lens. I got into that through my southern Italian work, and I also did some stuff on Basque family history after a lot of churning around in Italian family history.

But, again, that's been something that became a periodic commitment, and I would be periodically pulled in. Somebody's going to organize a collection of essays, so I'd get invited to submit an essay on my stuff. In a way, your fan keeps getting opened up more widely rather than narrowing, and that was something that took me a while to learn.

I have to sit down and take a fresh approach to my subject matter, or I bore myself. The big exception is encyclopedia articles. I've probably written the entry "Basques" in ten or twelve or fourteen encyclopedias. The fact of the matter is that it's very, very hard to be original with an encyclopedia article, so much so

that I now refuse to write them. I will not write an encyclopedia article on Basques. I've turned down three or four requests since writing my last one, because I'm very tired of that subject. I did the encyclopedia article in the *Encyclopedia Americana* in 1989, and it's a short entry, but the biggest one was the 1980 *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*—actually, I'm very proud of that one—organized by Harvard University, which was a major undertaking with big financing.

The project was under the editorship of a historian named Stephan Thernstrom, who was big in immigration and ethnic studies. I've never met Thernstrom, and the person who was really organizing it was a woman named Ann Orlov, and she was the person in the trenches, the one that you corresponded with. I can't remember how many ethnic groups were in it, but it was something like two hundred. It's a great big, fat book, and it became a canonical work of its kind.

Ann sent out a model of what she wanted, almost a questionnaire or a talking point deal, an outline, and I didn't like the model at all. I mean, I had a lot to say about some items that she wanted information on, but some of the items had no relevance whatsoever to the Basque-American experience. It wasn't Old World Basque, although they wanted a little section on the Old World homeland of the ethnic group in question, but it was really about an American ethnic group.

I struggled with her model, and I guess many other contributors were struggling with the project, too. Finally one day I just set the model aside, and I started writing. I wrote about twenty or thirty pages, double-spaced, which was about the length she wanted. I sent it to her with a letter saying, "I know this doesn't fit your model, but this is what I have to say about the Basque-American experience. I was finding that the outline you sent me was impeding my writing rather than facilitating it, so I understand that this is not what you had asked for. Take it if you want, but I understand if you can't use it."

She wrote back, and she was delighted. She said she was fine with it, and so that's what got published in that encyclopedia.

Five or six years later, I ran into her at the Social Science History Association meetings, and I didn't know her personally. I had a lot of exchange with her by mail, but I had never met her. I went up after she gave her talk, and said, "Ann, I'm Bill

Douglass, and I just wanted to say hello, because I feel like I know you, but we've never met."

She said, "Oh, Bill Douglass! I want to tell you a story."

I said, "What's that?"

She said, "When I got your essay, we were having a big problem, because nobody was doing the work. Everybody was kind of jammed up, and I couldn't understand why, but everybody was kind of having your problem. When you sent me your essay, I ran off two hundred copies and sent a copy of your Basque essay to every other contributor, saying, 'This is what we want.'"

I was very honored by what she had to say. [laughter] So that essay turned out to be the model essay for that publication. That's one I am proud of.

I was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Basque Country in 1984. That was Goio Monreal's doing. He was the *rector* [chancellor] of the Basque university system at the time, and by then I had four or five books out, and the program was hitting its stride. *Amerikanuak* would have been out by then, not in Spanish yet but certainly in English, and also *Muerte en Murélaga* in Spanish, or *Death in Murélaga* here. We had already started the studies abroad consortium, so I'd established an interaction with Goio by negotiating the consortium. Goio and I were pretty good friends at that point, so he proposed me for an honorary doctorate. I went over, and there was a nice ceremony in Vitoria. Enrique de Gandia from Argentina and I were the two people who got an honorary doctorate that year.

I was also named one of twenty corresponding members of Euskaltzaindia, the Basque Language Academy, in 1998. That one just dropped down from the sky. I had had virtually no interface at all with Euskaltzaindia. I know Enrike Knörr well and a few other members of the academy personally, but, it wasn't as if we had a whole lot of intimacy or interaction. I don't know who proposed me for that. I remember when I heard about it, Joseba and I had gone down for the day to Davis. It was in May, and our conference was going to come up in the summer of 1998, so we drove down to the university at Davis because Jacques Derrida and Manuel Castells, from the University of California, Berkeley, were giving a lecture, and we wanted to hear them. Also, we



Bill Douglass receives the Doctoris Honoris Causa medal from Goio Monreal, President of the University of the Basque Country, October 2, 1984.

wanted to get Castells to come up to our conference in Reno and maybe even give the keynote address.

We were successful. There were some family and health complications, but he did agree to come. Anyway, Joseba and I were driving back to Reno, and I remember we got up on top of the mountain and had dinner at a place called Rainbow Lodge, and it started snowing. It was snowing really hard, and I didn't have chains, and we were maybe ten miles from Donner Pass wondering if we were going to get over it. We had to drive real slowly going down. We probably got to Reno about one in the morning. I fell asleep, and the telephone rang, and it was Joseba. He said, "Do you know what? I was just checking something on the Internet, and they just made you an honorary member of Euskaltzaindia." That's how I found out about it. The bishop of Bilbao, Karmelo Etxenagusia, was visiting Reno shortly thereafter, and he was asked by Euskaltzaindia to bring me the actual physical paper certificate, so he hand delivered it.

In 1999 the Basque government gave me the Lagun Onari Award. The Basque government has another award that it's similar to. It's kind of the sister award to the Lagun Onari Award that's given to a Basque who has made a great contribution to Basque

culture. That's an internal award—it's only for Basques. Lagun Onari, by the very title, "To a Good Friend," means to an outsider. To my knowledge there've been five Lagun Onari Awards, and four of them have been given to presidents of countries or ex-presidents: Julio María Sanguinetti of Uruguay, Eduardo Frei-Tagle of Chile, Francesco Cossiga of Italy, and the ex-president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel.

When I was given that award, it came to me as a total surprise. I got to the Basque Country as I was supposed to give the opening address of the Second World Congress of Basque Collectivities in 1999. I had given the first one in 1995. When I got there, I was told that some newspapers wanted to interview me, because I was going to be given the Lagun Onari Award, and frankly, I didn't know what the Lagun Onari Award was. I found out rather quickly, and I was very honored. I was given that award through the initiative of Iñaki Aguirre [the Basque government's General Secretary of Foreign Affairs]. He was the one that proposed me for it, I found out subsequently. Iñaki Aguirre felt it was important to give the award to somebody who was not a politician.

By then they had given one award to Sanguinetti, and they had given one to Frei, and neither one was sitting president, but the political implications of those two awards were obvious. I mean, Chile and Uruguay were big destinations of Basque migration. I guess one could almost say that in giving the award to the ex-presidents, they were giving the award to those countries. I was the third, and Iñaki told me specifically that he was of the opinion that they shouldn't continue to set a precedent of only giving it to foreign leaders and foreign politicians.

They then gave the award to the father of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel. I'm just reading between the lines—nobody in the Basque government has ever told me this—but my guess is that they gave it to Havel at about the same time that they were working on the Plan Ibarretxe [a proposal to renew the 1979 Gernika Statute, which established the constitutional framework of relationship between the Basque Autonomous Community and the Spanish state]. I think the symbolism of the Havel thing was to give something to the man who had effected a peaceful separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Havel steered the country of Czechoslovakia through a breakup, if you will, and he had great personal influence over that. I'm guessing that's why they probably picked him out,



Basque President Juan José Ibarretxe (left) congratulates Bill Douglass for receiving the Lagun Onari Award at the 1999 World Congress of Basque Collectivities, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

because I don't think Havel had any specific connection to the Basque Country to my knowledge. And obviously, there are no Basques in the Czech Republic, or maybe there are ten or something, but we're not talking about an historical tie. I think the symbolism is fairly evident, and Havel was recognized as a statesman who had taken a country that had a lot of internal and political tension and helped steer it towards a peaceful resolution of those differences.

The fifth award was given to Cossiga, and it's my understanding that Cossiga got it because he went out on a limb during the José María Aznar years [President of Spain, 1998-2004] and tried to broker a contact between Madrid and Vitoria-Gasteiz [in relation to resolution of political violence in the Basque Country].

And Cossiga, I think, got roughed up. I think he was insulted or rejected by Madrid, and he was told to mind his own business. I have that secondhand.

I think that the Basque government appreciated Cossiga's effort to bring the sides together at a very difficult time when there was a total impasse and a brick wall. So they gave him that award in appreciation for and gratitude for his effort, even though it didn't go anywhere. [In July 2005, the state of Idaho received the Lagun Onari Award, and in October 2006 the Republic of Argentina recieved it as well.]

I was also very proud to get another two awards in 1999. I was given the UNR Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award and the Distinguished Faculty Award, which is the only time that both awards have ever been given to one person in the same year. I think there's one other person that got both of those awards, but in the same year it was unheard of.

The Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award is about your whole academic career. There's a committee that selects the outstanding researcher, and the committee is comprised of the previous five awardees. So when you get that award, you have to go on that committee for five years, and every year the longest-standing member of the committee goes off and chairs the proceedings the last year that he or she is on the committee. I think I went off in 2004, because I got it in 1999. So you have to be nominated by somebody within the university, then once you're nominated, the committee gets in touch with you and says, "You've been nominated. Do you wish to apply?" Then you have to put together a statement, and the chair of your department writes a statement. You provide, of course, a vita and samples of your work—as much or as little as you want. You can give them a boxful of books, if you want. Then you're competing against all of the other nominees around the university.

Actually, Carmelo nominated me one year, and I didn't get it. Then he asked me the next year if I wanted to be nominated, and I said, "Not really." If I didn't get it, I didn't get it. What I didn't understand, at the time, was that there's a kind of unwritten rule that one year it's in social sciences, humanities, and the arts, and the next year it's in the hard sciences. It's kind of an unwritten rule, but it's the way it works. And I was

nominated in the wrong year, so it was going to go a mathematician or a physicist or whatever, you know. I didn't understand how it worked, but I subsequently found out.

Nineteen ninety-nine was my last year as the coordinator of the Basque Studies Program, and I think that it probably called some attention to me in the sense that it would have been the last year I would have been eligible for the award. Had they not given me the Distinguished Faculty Award that year, my guess is that I would have been ineligible after that, because I would have been emeritus. So I guess that was my last chance, and somebody recognized that and said, "We should consider William Douglass."

I haven't a clue how the Distinguished Faculty Award works, because there were no consequences for me after getting that award. I know that there's a committee and a nomination process. I was just handed a plaque and a check at an awards ceremony, and that was the end of it. Oh, I think they also put my face on the next year's campus telephone directory, and that was one of the things they do if you're the Distinguished Faculty person. [laughter]

Both UNR awards are a great honor. They're the highest two awards that a faculty member can get here at this university, and so I was very fortunate to receive them both.

Notes

1. For further information see Jack Douglass, *Tap Dancing on Ice: The Life and Times of a Nevada Gaming Pioneer* (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 1996).

2. Robert "Bob" Laxalt (1923-2001) was the University of Nevada Press director between 1961 and 1983. Born in Shoshone, Idaho, Bob became the public literary voice of the Basques in the American West following the publication of his memoir, *Sweet Promised Land*, in 1957.

3. Juan Manuel "Jon" Bilbao (1914-1994) was the author of *Eusko Bibliographia*. Born in Cayey, Puerto Rico, he obtained a BA in Spanish medieval history at the University of Madrid in 1936 and an MA in Spanish at Columbia University in June 1939. As a result of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) Jon, an officer in the Basque Army, went into exile with the Basque government in 1937. He resided over three decades in different

countries, including Cuba, France, and the United States, and he died in the Basque town of Getxo.

4. See Warren d'Azevedo, *Warren d'Azevedo: By Dead Reckoning* (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2005).

5. DRI was originally located in facilities at the former Stead Air Force Base, north of Reno.

6. Mary Ellen Glass (1927-2007) was the founder of the University of Nevada Oral History Program and was its director until 1983.

7. Paul Dominique Laxalt (b. 1922) was lieutenant governor of Nevada from 1962 to 1966, governor from 1967 to 1971, and a U.S. senator from 1974 to 1987. He became one of the most influential Basques in the history of Nevada.

8. Peter "Pete" Ignacio Echeverria (1918-2000) was a well-known lawyer who served in the Nevada Senate from 1959 to 1963 and later was chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission from 1973 to 1977.

9. Robert Erburu became the director and the chairman of The Times Mirror Co., publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*.

10. The first volume of *Eusko Bibliographia* was published in 1970, and between 1970 and 1977 a total of ten volumes were published. In 1984, another three volumes were added, for a total of 400,000 entries.

11. Center for Basque Studies records indicate that the first issue of the newsletter was sent to 900 people but the overall mailing list might have been larger at that time.

12. Eloy Elecea Placer (1914-1974) was born in Ozaeta, Basque Country. He was a former lieutenant in the Basque Army and a political exile who fled General Franco's Spain in 1949, finding refuge in the United States. He earned a PhD degree from Louisiana State University in 1958 and taught Spanish in Texas, Louisiana, New York, Kentucky, and finally Nevada, and was a member of the University of Nevada, Reno Foreign Languages Department from 1969 to 1974. Placer was the coordinator of, and one of the instructors for, the Basque Studies Program Summer Sessions Abroad. He passed away in Reno in 1974.

13. Sara Vélez Mallea is currently the Managing Editor of the University Nevada Press, and she has been involved in the Basque Book Series for several years. She has been responsible for editing over 50 percent of the Basque books.

14. The “*Roots* phenomenon” refers to the unprecedented interest in ancestry and ethnicity among Americans as a result of the highly popular TV adaptation of Alex Haley’s best-selling novel, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1976).

15. Previously, in 1983, the National Endowment for Humanities awarded the library over \$64,000 for cataloging Basque books. The grant was initially written by Harold Morehouse and Yoshi Hendricks.

16. Marc Ugalde was the Basque Librarian until July 2003, then Kathryn Etcheverria took over as an interim librarian between 2003 and 2005. Imanol Irizar was selected as the new Basque Studies Librarian as of January 2006. Due to personal reasons Imanol was temporarily replaced by Nere Erkiaga from August 2006 to June 2007. A new search for a Basque Librarian began in the summer of 2007.

17. As a consequence of the Spanish Civil War, Yon Oñatibia Audela (1911-1979) went into exile, first to Venezuela in 1941 and then to the U.S. He studied at the New York College of Music and was a delegate of the Basque government-in-exile in New York from 1951 to 1963. After twenty-seven years he returned to his home in Oiartzun, and it was there that he died.

18. Juan Pedro Magunagoicoechea obtained a PhD degree in Spanish literature at Columbia University in 1975. He has taught Spanish at several American universities and is currently living in California.

19. According to the University of Nevada Board of Regents’ Meeting Minutes (July 1969) both Dr. Grotegut and Dr. Placer were first hired in 1969. So, in this regard, Placer might have been hired prior to Maguna.

20. See William Douglass, “In the Mirror: Reflections on the Origins of the Basque Studies Program,” *RIEV* 38:1 (1993): 185-198 and “Through the Looking Glass, or Becoming the Datum,” *RIEV* 38:2 (1993): 49-61.

21. During a visit to Reno in March of 1988, Basque President José Antonio Ardanza noted, “During the darkest day of the Franco era when we were denied our language, our culture, and our identity, we were consoled by the knowledge that an American university in Nevada had lit one small candle in the night.”

22. Gloria Castresana Waid is President of the Basque American Foundation, established in 1984. To our knowledge the Basque American Foundation is currently inactive. The organization is a splinter group of the Society of Basque Studies in America, which was founded in San Francisco in 1979.

23. Josu Legarreta is the current director of the Directorate of the Basque Communities Abroad, in charge of institutional relations between the Basque government and the Basque diaspora.

24. At an anti-Basque nationalist congress held in Bilbao, Gloria Castresana accused UNR's Center for Basque Studies of having attempted to squelch all Basque studies initiatives in the United States other than its own and of serving as a stalking horse for Basque nationalism. She subsequently accused Douglass of unspecified *rapíña* [theft] in a letter to a Basque Country newspaper.

PART TWO

GORKA AULESTIA

Gorka Jon Aulestia Txakartegi was born in the coastal town of Ondarroa in the Basque province of Bizkaia in 1932. He studied at the Catholic Diocesan Seminary of Vitoria and at the Jesuit University of Deusto, Bilbao, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology. He was a parish priest in the Basque Country and a missionary in Africa, and he earned the first PhD in Basque studies from the University of Nevada, Reno. In 1989 Gorka was inducted into the Society of Basque Studies in America's Ninth Annual Basque Hall of Fame for authoring the most comprehensive Basque-English dictionary at the time. He is currently teaching Basque literature at the University of the Basque Country. (This oral history was conducted in Spanish and translated into English.)

A calm beginning: from Franco's Spain to Reno, Nevada

I see myself with two different lives. In the first one, in 1966 or 1967, I was a priest in Bilbao. I heard about a young anthropologist, William Douglass, who had come to Echalar to learn Basque. That was the first time I heard a little bit of talk about Reno, Nevada, so I knew that a Basque studies program had been established in an American university.



Gorka Aulestia, 2007

It seemed curious to me that an American would have come to the Basque Country, to Navarre, and then to Aulestia [Murélaga in Basque] to stay with a family to learn Basque. I was curious and began to inquire about what he was doing and about his thesis *Muerte en Murélaga* [*Death in Murélaga*]. I have always been interested in Basque culture, in the Basque world. This was my first knowledge of someone from the outside who was interested in our culture.

At the time I didn't maintain any contact with Bill. I knew that he was the friend of friends of mine, such as the *bertsolari* [Basque verse improviser], Xabier Amuritz, who used to go quite often to Aulestia and the Lekeitio area, and also Don Emilio, another parish priest who very much loved Bill. Don Emilio was older than me, and I knew him, but I didn't have any personal relationship with him.

Later, I became a parish priest in Gernika. Sometimes when Father Juan Maguna [Magunagoicoechea] came to Gernika, he used to celebrate Mass at my church. His family members were my parishioners. Maguna used to come with the Reno program,

with Jon Bilbao and Eloy Placer, and they would organize a summer studies program with Koldo Mitxelena, in Iparralde as well as in Hegoalde or Hego Euskal Herria [southern Basque Country].

I learned through Maguna about the courses that he taught about Baroja and so on and how they would come to the Basque Country with thirty or forty girls and boys from Reno as part of the Basque Studies Program Summer School. Then between 1970 and 1975 I started learning a little bit more about what was being “cooked” in that program. This was my second encounter, a much closer, more significant and real encounter with the Reno program.

This was the end of the Franco regime. I left the Basque Country on June 10, 1975, and Franco died at the end of November. On September 27, Franco had given the order to execute ETA members Ángel Otaegi and Jon Paredes, aka “Txiki,” together with three other non-Basques—José Luis Sánchez-Bravo, Ramón García, and José Humberto Baena—who were members of FRAP [acronym for Antifascist and Patriotic Revolutionary Front; these were the last executions of Francoism]. The moment was very tough, and on the eve of Saint Isidro in mid May, four people had been killed in Gernika: a married couple who were very close friends of mine, an ETA member, and a Civil Guard member.

For Gernika, the death of those four people in May, who died in such a bestial and brutal way, as I said on one occasion, was like a second bombing.¹ There were people who thought that I was involved in that matter [with ETA]. While I was getting the corpses ready for the funeral the next morning, seven Civil Guard members with machine-guns entered my house. In the following days I had to change houses in order to sleep. I stayed very nervous, and there was lots of pressure for some days. Anyway, it wasn’t a place to live or to do anything. I put my situation in order with my bishop, Don Antonio Añoveros, who was very nice to me, and I decided to leave.

I was really attracted to the idea of doing something with my life in support of the Basque culture and the Basque language. While I was a priest, I had been in Otxarkoaga, a neighborhood in Bilbao, for four years in a world completely different from mine. It was not a Basque-speaking world. I am from a Basque-

speaking and Basque-nationalist family from Ondarroa. My first language was Basque, and at the age of eleven I couldn't speak Spanish.

Then I saw the beginning of my second life, and I wanted to conclude the first part of it. I wanted a calm beginning, starting from zero as I did.

I didn't speak English, but I did know French, because I had studied for a year in Paris, getting ready to become a Basque missionary in the Congo. I ended up teaching French grammar to teachers who were going to be missionaries the following year. I knew French grammar quite well.

At a given point, I put together everything in two letters of recommendation. One letter was from Don Antonio Añoveros and was directed to William Douglass, and the other was from Matilde, who was one of the daughters from the *baserri* in Aulestia, where Bill Douglass had studied Basque. Matilde was married to one of the Arriens from Gernika, and she was one of my catechists. Then, when Matilde learned about me suddenly leaving Gernika, she sent a recommendation letter to Bill. Of course, I think that Bill Douglass, once he saw the signature, was predisposed to welcoming me with closed eyes.

Prior to my arrival in the United States I'd never exchanged a word with Bill, and I think I never saw those letters. I believe both Matilde and Bishop Añoveros asked him to welcome me. When I arrived in Reno, I introduced myself to Bill, "I am Gorka Aulestia." (By the way, Bill told me later that Jon Bilbao said that *he* was the one who introduced me and the one who made me part of the Basque Program. But I told him, "Bill, how could he say that? Was he losing his memory or what? I didn't know Jon Bilbao, did I? I came with the two letters, directly.")

Bill Douglass welcomed me and offered me a place in the Foreign Languages Department teaching Spanish. At that time, the department had Gerald Petersen and Eugene Grotegut, a very close friend of Eloy Placer, who knew the political history of the Basque Country.

By the time I went to Reno I was secularized. I left the papers officially in order, but a year later I got a notification from Don Antonio, and it seems that Rome demanded more reasons for me to be secularized. Well, from the moment that a forty-something-year-old person takes such a decision in life, it seems to me enough reason. I think that the canonical law is very

good, but it seemed a joke. I sent a note to Don Antonio, and I got the secularization in fifteen days. What I didn't get in a whole year, I got in fifteen days.

Then, the following year, 1977, I married Mertxe de Renobales from Bilbao. Mertxe had a bachelor's in chemistry, and she continued her career in chemistry in San Francisco. Because of the marriage, she had to come to Reno, but there wasn't a PhD program in chemistry, so she had to do a PhD in bio-chemistry. In 1979, she went to Pullman, Washington, to do a post-doctoral in bio-chemistry, where, at the time, there was a very prestigious professor. At the end of our stay in America, a little boy arrived. The gynecologists had told us that we couldn't have children because of some difficulties with Mertxe. I think that the university laboratories where she worked had something to do with it. But, look, we overcame that, and a little boy came on March 14, 1988. His name is Iker Aulestia Renobales.

Officially, I started my first course as a UNR student in January 1976. I see myself on that hill, near the swimming pool, where I enrolled in January. I didn't know even where I was, and little by little, I got used to it.

At the beginning, the university administration didn't want to accept my priesthood career studies of twelve years, and I had to do two trips to the Basque Country. I also had a bachelor's in sociology from the University of Deusto. Bill Douglass said to me, "What kind of papers do you have?"

"I haven't got any papers, but look, I have one from Deusto."

Jon Bilbao and Bill Douglass called me and said, "Listen, it seems that they want you to first do a bachelor's degree."

Well, they didn't allow me to do the master's at that point. Later on, they called me again saying, "They have found in the university by-laws, in small print, that those who have come out of seminaries and have been priests could enroll in master's programs."

However, what saved me was my "studies" at the Sorbonne University in Paris. I got a very good mark in French at the Sorbonne—*très bien*—but what UNR didn't know was that the exam I took and those studies only lasted eight hours with a sandwich break at noon. [laughter] I was very well prepared in grammar. Then the examiners said, "Please talk about one of the regions of France."

Of course, for me France was Euskal Herria [the Basque Country], Labourde, the fishermen of Donibane. I got an excellent mark.

Once UNR saw the transcripts from the Sorbonne and Deusto universities, they said, "We cannot send this gentleman to do a bachelor's degree." So they allowed me to do a master's degree.

I began, little by little, to teach Spanish in the Foreign Languages Department, and then later, I even taught French. When I met Carmelo Urza, he was a student at UNR and was also teaching Spanish 101. He left the textbook that I then used to teach, because I got Carmelo's teaching assistantship. At the time, Carmelo was trying to do a master's thesis on José de Arteche ["José de Arteche: The Life in his Works," 1978]. It had a very long prologue of seventy-some pages. I don't know whether the prologue had a continuation or even how the story ended.

Then, Carmelo married Monique Laxalt, and they moved to Iowa. He came back with a PhD and taught some classes, and he ended up organizing the program for studying abroad. I saw him as the right person for that program—more suited to it than teaching courses on subjects that Bill, Jon, Joseba Zulaika, or I had taught. I saw him more as a businessman establishing studies all around the world, with his telephones and his Post-its. At the beginning, the Studies Abroad Program was parallel to the Basque Studies Program itself. Bill saw it as a parallel structure. Carmelo had done impressive work.

Personally, Carmelo is very nice, very nice, but we have completely different sensibilities. He was born in the Basque Country, and I think his parents are from Sestao, but he emigrated when he was little.

Between January 1976 and 1979, I did a master's in French [*"Le Pays Basque vu par les Romantiques Français,"* 1978] in two and a half years, and then in a year, another master's in Spanish literature. I focused intensively on doing my two master's degrees while I taught Basque language for five hours. At the beginning I practiced both careers at the same time, but later on the department told me, "You have to choose one." I chose French.

I loved French literature, because I knew the grammar quite well, but not so much the literature. I enjoyed it tremendously with professors such as Enrico Bertalot—with whom I later became very good friends—and the French lady, Madame Paule-Colette Fricke. Bertalot died, and my wife and I attended his

funeral. I also had a great relationship with Madame Fricke. The courses were marvelous, and I still continue to read many French novels. At one point, I brought from Paris some two hundred novels, and I enjoyed them.

Because I had a Spanish passport I did not necessarily have to start my studies in Spanish. I knew that the Spanish Department didn't like my choice very much. "If you are Spanish why did you choose French?"

There were little things that we could overcome with time. I have nothing against the Spanish people. I enjoyed the Spanish master's very much, and I finished it really fast, because I already had some credits from my French master's that I used for my Spanish master's. I met great people. I couldn't forget them, and I put them on my PhD committee. Nelson Rojas was—I hope he is still there—an outstanding person. We used to go to the mountains with Nelson.

Beginning in January 1976, I earned \$300, \$320 a month in the Foreign Languages Department, and with that I sustained myself. During those years the Basque Studies Program didn't have a nickel. Until 1979 my pay didn't increase too much. That was the traditional teaching assistantship, I believe. Once I came back in 1979, 1980 from Pullman, my situation changed radically, because Basque Studies offered me a permanent contract.

Building a pyramid: the Basque-English dictionary

When I finished with the master's, I thought about going back to the Basque Country, but my wife had gotten a post-doctoral position in Pullman. Between 1979 and 1980, I embarked to Pullman, but before I left Reno, when we were getting into the car, Bill Douglass explained to me the situation. "Gorka, there is \$50,000 or \$52,000 to bring Koldo Mitxelena to Reno [to do a dictionary], but he and his wife said 'No.' Would you do it?"

I said in the prologue of the first Basque-English dictionary that I thought twice about the answer—if the Basques don't have a dictionary of that kind, well, something should be done in that regard. I felt like a pygmy to embrace such an endeavor, but at the beginning, we thought that the dictionary would have a vocabulary of 2,000 or 3,000 words, like the one made by community activist and scholar Joseph "Joe" Eiguren in Boise. [laughter] But instead of being only Bizkaian dialect [Basque

dialect from the province of Bizkaia] it would include other Basque dialects. We never thought that it would take us seven or seven and a half years.

So I embarked on this project, looking up to the one above and trusting in Him, with very little strength, very bad English, and knowing that I wasn't a Basque language specialist. I knew Latin, Basque, Spanish, French, and enough Italian, and I have learned Greek, but everything depended on the goal. Joe Eiguren, having been a fisherman in Lekeitio, did a dictionary, didn't he? So, I said, "Yes," and that's how it started.

Bill even promised me a green card, and I got it in a matter of a few months. I never thought about being an American citizen. I just wanted to finish my commitments and return to my country as soon as possible. Thanks to Robert Laxalt, we also obtained several grants. However, during the first years, we defended ourselves as we could. There was a time when there was no money.

In addition, I had a half-invitation from Diputación de Bizkaia to take control of the Department of Culture in Bizkaia. So I went to the Basque Country to explore the situation. Well, there wasn't a specific offer, but I would have earned much more than in Reno. But for me to abandon the dictionary project—at that moment it was to the letter "H"—and to go back to my country seemed like treason to Bill and to our Basque culture. I had given my word to Bill that I would come back, so I did without doubts.

I remember that there was even a moment when Bill told me, "There is not any money, Gorka, but if you come back to America you will find a new contract at the Basque Studies Program." And there it was, the new contract, and I signed it. At one point Bill even reduced his own salary to half for me to get paid. I also survived through scholarships, and thanks to his personal money, we could bring the dictionary project forward. That is how it went, little by little. For instance, during my stay in Pullman I didn't receive any compensation for my work on the dictionary. However, when I came back to Reno with fifteen boxes of a year's worth of work without having been paid at all, I had a contract that gave me more security and a good salary to live on.

I began the dictionary on May 17, 1980. That was the date that the volcano Mount St. Helens exploded. Then I spent the whole winter—by the way it was quite harsh with a lot of ice

and snow—working on the dictionary and also attending some English linguistic classes at the University of Pullman, because all day alone doing the dictionary was too much.

At least the infrastructure was done, but, of course, without dialects and without many examples. Then we needed to translate everything into English. My wife helped me during our stay in Pullman, and then back in Reno, scholars Gretchen Holbert and Mateo Osa also helped me.

If I had been in Egypt, well, the dictionary project would have been like building a pyramid—that's the impression I have. It wasn't like an obsession, but when I woke up at three in the morning, the first thought that came to mind was on which card, in which letter, I was. I always wanted to go back to my country, but I had committed myself for many years. I saw a pyramid on top of me, and I was not able to get out.

My official UNR title was lexicographer, and that was very strange to me, because I didn't know what I was. I knew I was male, Basque, a former priest, and that I had a desire for work, but I didn't know anything else. In a presentation of two books at EUTG [acronym for University and Technical Studies of Gipuzkoa, today's University of Deusto San Sebastián-Donostia campus], the presenter said, "This man who has done these two books, is neither a linguist nor a lexicographer," and I thought about the American title of lexicographer.

A good person at UNR didn't know what to call me and baptized me with the title of lexicographer. [laughter] Well, I had some knowledge and interest in languages, but, of course, if you don't crown it with a baptism or a title, it seems that you are nobody.

In 1982 Linda White began working on the dictionary. I was very impressed by Linda's impressive capacity for work and by her command of English. I taught her various courses on Basque language—I think it was level 101, 203, 204—Basque dialectology and Basque conversation. Then, without credits we used to spend a day improving her conversation skills. She was interested in speaking. Anyway, Linda White's help was ten over ten. If it hadn't been for her, the dictionaries would not exist—maybe a player [author] would have existed, but as I said, the dictionary would have lacked another language.

With the exception of a few friends that I can count with the fingers of one hand, not only for my English and the dictionary project and the literature classes, I believe that Linda

has been the most wonderful person I have met, on a cultural as well as on a personal level, in my fourteen years in America.

Linda is an extremely intelligent woman, not only because of her language skills, but also because she was very perceptive about my English difficulties. She captured immediately what I tried to say with my bad English. On many occasions she was more aware of what I wanted, not because of what I said but what I tried to say. How could anyone have such proficiency with the languages?

I have such a good memory of her, and I will continue to have. We have two very difficult cultures, two different ways of understanding life, two different ideologies about many important things in life, and two different sensibilities. Sometimes Linda said, "And being so different we have never argued. After so many years working so closely together—we put so many hours in the dictionary project—we have never argued."

Linda's personality is very soft, with great manners. She always got on well with the then secretary, Jill Berner. She was also very receptive to the people who came to Reno to see the library or to learn. Also, Jon Bilbao was a master in it. How well they welcomed the people! Linda has such fluency with the languages, so she acted as the bridge, as a Cicerone. She could do anything.

I am not sure if Linda White has already published her new Basque grammar, *Aurrera* [*Aurrera! A Textbook for Learning Basque*, 2007]. In her prologue she thanks me, because the first word that I repeated every day when we worked on the dictionary was, "Linda, *aurrera* [onward]," and the word stuck with her. In my heart there will



"I believe that Linda has been the most wonderful person I have met . . . in my fourteen years in America." Left to right: Gorka Aulestia, Linda White, and visiting scholar, Nere Lete, at UNR's Quad, 1980s.

always be a place for a monument for Linda White. I am very thankful to her. Thank you Linda, *eskerrik asko*.

In an ordinary working day in Reno, as I said, I woke up usually at three in the morning, but I remained in bed resting a little. Now I wake up at four and go out at five. My first thought was on which page, in which letter, and in which example I was in the dictionary, and I thanked the one above for a new day. From three o'clock I didn't sleep very much. It was like that for seven and a half years.

Many times I went to work at seven in the morning—the library didn't open officially until eight—in order to warm the “engine.” Well, each of us in the department had the key to the small door through which we entered the main library. One day I was even followed by the police, because I went to work at four in the morning. I just wanted to finish the dictionary, so I worked Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and sick days. I gave them, I don't know, two months of accumulated sick days. I didn't “marry” the administration in that sense. I put in lots of extra hours without pay.

Immediately, Linda would show up. The official people showed up at eight because they had to clock in. Bill used to show up at any time he wanted. When Jon was around, Bill used to come at eleven in the morning, and he would say, “Jon, too early.” [laughter] Of course, if you are working on the bibliography cards until the wee hours of the morning and drinking whiskey with *moderation*, then the next morning at eleven, when the rest of us have already been there for five hours, you would think that you had got up very early. We all laughed, but when everybody had gone Jon stayed with his pack of cigarettes, his bottle of whiskey, and his library cards. Jon also used to go to the Santa Fé Hotel [Basque restaurant and former boardinghouse], and there he was drinking with the local Basques in the bar. Jon stayed there.

At twelve it was swimming-pool time. That was my lunch hour. I went up the hill to the swimming pool, which had recently been opened. Then I went back to have a coffee. I didn't bring anything—my wife used to bring me the American sandwich, as I called it—and I resisted until five, and then I went home for dinner.

This working style reached a point that was clearly shown in a picture that Lisa Corcostegui took. [Lisa also assisted Gorka with the dictionary.] At the Basque Studies door there was a sign

that read, "Gorka, open twenty-four hours." [laughter] Somebody told me once, "Why don't you bring a bed? Here you have the bathroom, and you have the bar near the bookstore. You are just missing a mattress." [laughter] This was just a joke, but it didn't bother me having to work so hard. The first Basque-English dictionary was published in 1989.

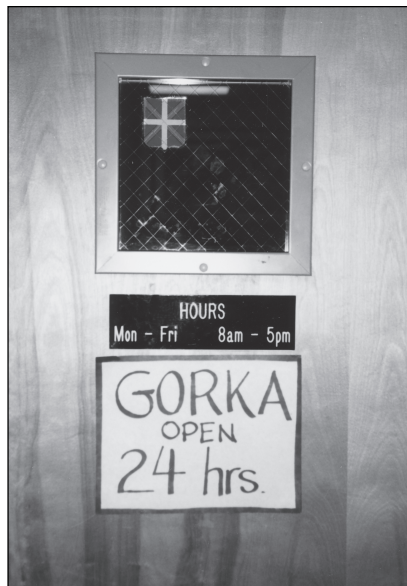
Certain tranquility: obtaining a PhD in Basque studies

The Tutorial PhD Program in Basque studies wasn't even planned by the time I finished the master's and began the dictionary. Maybe in Bill's mind there was a plan, but I didn't see it.

What did it take to keep me going? I have seen my future clearly since the first day in Reno. I still say that I am a man very grateful to America, and when I say America and the Americans, obviously, I say Bill Douglass and Linda White, because I was offered a new beginning in my work. However, I didn't want to continue living in America after having finished my commitments. My goal was to finish and above all to get a diploma, to be able to go back quickly to the Basque Country in order to continue teaching.

I saw in the Basque PhD the possibility of an exit, besides the subjects I could get in the PhD program. It was a PhD tutorial program, and Bill didn't lie to us. Since the first day he told us, "Well, in relation to the professors available, we don't have many, at this moment."

So I ended up with an agreement with Bill. Half a



"Why don't you bring a bed? Here you have the bathroom, and you have the bar near the bookstore. You are just missing a mattress." "Gorka open 24 hours" sign at the Basque Studies Program entrance door, 1980s.

day—the mornings—would be devoted to the dictionary, and the evenings would be devoted to my doctoral courses. I began the program in 1985. Since I had begun my studies in French and Spanish literatures, I knew clearly, without a doubt, what my doctoral dissertation subject would be. I was going to do it on *bertsolarism*.

I graduated with a PhD in Basque studies in September of 1987. [The dissertation was entitled, “*El ‘Bertsolarismo’: Literatura Oral Improvisada del País Vasco*”—*The ‘Bertsolarism’: Improvised Oral Literature from the Basque Country*.] As I explained in one of the chapters of my book on *bertsolarism* [*Improvisational Poetry from the Basque Country*], there are similar phenomena around the world. Because of this chapter many Basques and the *bertsolaritza* association (Bertsozale Elkarte) have visited many countries from Japan to Cuba, and from the Canary Islands to the Balearic Islands, to learn about how others sing and improvise verses. I believe this enriches us.

Obtaining the PhD meant certain tranquility in the sense that at any moment I was going to get what I wanted, to leave America. Even more, my wife was pregnant with our son, Iker. She had already applied for tenure in the Basque Country, but she didn’t get it because the position had already been given. In that sense, let’s say, she didn’t get what she aimed for. Then she got tenure among seven other candidates, but this time the process did justice. Then my wife always thought, “We could never go back to the Basque Country.”

I told Mertxe that one day we would come back home. My wife had gotten her PhD and done postdoctoral research, and I had also done a PhD. So what that meant was the tranquility to be able to say to Bill Douglass, as I told him in the elevator, “Bill I am leaving.”

Like many other things, I believe Bill was bothered by it, though I didn’t see any reaction from him. Carmelo once told me that Bill thought I was going stay there until retirement, but my ideas were very clear.

However, I believe that my return to the Basque Country was very beneficial for the program, which has changed a lot under Joseba Zulaika. At first, Bill may have taken it badly, because it was unexpected, but in the end Bill has been better off with me leaving in order for Joseba to enter the program, because of everything that he has done. I think now Bill must be very happy

that I left. I could have done very little, because I wouldn't have been an innovator. I would have been a perpetual worker but only doing things on Basque literature. I had neither the ability nor the willingness to do administrative things. You lose your health. The few things I do, I do intensively, but nothing more.

Joseba, I remember, arrived as a student. He was working in Reno preparing his dissertation without having finished yet at Princeton University. At the beginning, Joseba, as every student, had very little money, poor guy! I used to see him working like a dog during the weekends, putting in many, many hours. I was even worried about his health—eating that spread of peanut butter, which would stink up the whole office. I remember that in Sparks I offered him the first potato omelet in my house. Well, he did the omelet, because he told me he was a specialist in making omelets, putting onions in, *et cetera*.

That's how Joseba became part of the Basque Program—with the "negativity" argument as a central issue in his conversations. Joseba lived the academic arguments very intensely, almost obsessed. He had an impressive ability for working, and as he has shown us later on, also a great ability for writing, for opening and discovering new worlds from the anthropological perspective, with very interesting contributions.

I went back to the Basque Country in 1989, and I got a teaching job at the University of Deusto. I asked Father Plazaola, the chancellor of the University of Deusto, San Sebastián campus, who has since passed away and with whom I had become very good friends, "Why did you choose me?" There were thirty-three candidates for a small position, to teach just one subject.

He said, "I chose you because all the candidates had three initials after their names—'Lic.' [short for bachelor's in Spanish]. There was only one who also had three different initials—'Doc.' [short for doctorate in Spanish]. And who is he? Gorka Aulestia." At that time, my uncle was at the University of Deusto, on the campus of Bilbao, but I didn't ask him for a job. It was a small job, but that's how I began.

One day a Japanese lady came to see whether I was willing to go to Kobe, near Tokyo to teach, and I told her, "I think you are mistaken. My brother, Gotzon, is the musician."

She replied to me, "I like his music, and we know who your brother is, but we like the music made from poetry in the phenomenon of the Basque troubadours. We have the famous

haikus in Japan, which are similar to the Basque versifiers, and we are interested in a course or a semester.”

Well, a person from Japan came to Vitoria to offer me the possibility of work because of the *bertsolarism* phenomena. That was thanks to Reno, Nevada.

The Basque Studies Program: from close and afar

By the time I arrived in 1975, the Basque Program was eight years old. Since the beginning Bill Douglass has always been in charge of the boat. Jon Bilbao was there sometimes, because he used to stay temporarily. He used to travel many times to the Basque Country to work on his bibliography. Juan Maguna was teaching Spanish literature in the Foreign Languages Department, substituting for the deceased Eloy Placer, who was from Álava. Jill Berner, the administrative assistant, preceded me by a few months. She started in 1976, and she is still there. [In 2006, Jill celebrated her thirtieth anniversary at UNR.]

During my stay, if Jill Berner—so wonderful—would have had the decision making and the strength of Linda You invited Linda to do something, and she didn’t hesitate whatsoever. [laughter] Jill has done everything that she was asked to do. She has even taken Basque classes. She has focused on being a very efficient and positive secretary, and she is a delightful lady of great manners. In that sense, Jill, despite being different, is very similar to her friend, Linda. Jill has been a golden contribution to the program. (Jill, her husband, and their daughters stayed in my house in San Sebastián when they visited the Basque Country for the first time. I have very warm memories of her.) For me there are four foundational fathers of the Basque Studies Program, and I have written about it in nine different articles².

For many years Robert Laxalt had been the brain behind all of this. Laxalt was in Katanga, Congo, at one point, and years later I was also in Katanga, but with a completely different goal. He said that he was in Katanga as an American spy, and I was there as a missionary.³

The Desert Research Institute contacted Laxalt about the establishment of a Basque studies program. The center’s office wasn’t where it is now but outside the university campus. After some years—all this has been written about on numerous occasions—Laxalt focused his work on the Basques and thought

about a Reno native, the young William Douglass, who was finishing his anthropology studies in Chicago, to manage the program.

Bill went to Madrid with his family, because of his interest in Spanish literature. I believe it was Julio Caro Baroja who recommended him to study the Basque language of the “barbarians” who live in the north, so Bill began fieldwork first in Echalar, Navarre, and then in Bizkaia.

Bill had also been, let’s say, the brain behind the program. However, in fourteen years, I never saw Robert Laxalt in the program, which tells us about who was behind the scenes. It is just a simple fact, isn’t it? I think, and I don’t mind saying it, that Bill didn’t make any serious decision without consulting and discussing it with his friend Robert Laxalt.

We cannot understand the Basque Program without Bill. He is a person with an extraordinary capacity for work, with very good English writing skills, with a great comprehension of Spanish, and, even, of Euskara [Basque language], at least during a few years of his life, although he doesn’t speak it 100 percent. He also did great and interesting studies in his field of anthropology, and he continues to do so.

As a director he survived economically through many difficult years that I also lived through. Bill was a man who never imposed himself on you. However, you did everything according to what he said. He wasn’t a traditional director of a program, a dictator, imposing and getting angry with people—much to the contrary.

So what I can say about him is entirely or nearly entirely positive. To finish, I would say that he is *also* an “American.” This word for me is very significant and says much. He has the right to be American as I have the right to be Basque, with everything—the connotation and semantic—that the word “American” implies.

In third place was Jon Bilbao. To speak of the Basque Studies Library at the University of Nevada, Reno is to speak for many years of Jon Bilbao. During the first years, he had the order of the library in his mind, with little pieces of paper in each book. We received many, many books through Basque libraries and bookstores, such as Linacero in Vitoria and Kirikiño in Bilbao.

Jon also taught an outstanding Basque history course. He wasn’t a historian, like others such as Martin Ugalde who wrote five volumes of history. We could argue that academically you

can see that they are not historians, but they gave lots of information, and that was the only thing that we cared about when we—the majority of us—didn't know anything. He also taught a Basque-language course.

Jon was also in charge of the summer courses abroad. I think that Jon never failed to attend any of the summer courses in Oñati with the people from Boise and with Yon Oñatibia. He was always ready, and he didn't mind going back to his homeland, although he wasn't born in the Basque Country. Jon Bilbao had been 100 percent perfect for the program because of his courses and his work on the library.

Regarding his personality, well, you have to respect it because of his age, birth, hobbies, past, and political party. He was very influenced by the Spanish Civil War. Jon was very interesting, different, and very well educated. As Joseba Zulaika says, "When all the Basques were playing the *txistu* [traditional flute], he played the guitar; and when the rest of us were wearing a tie, he was wearing a scarf." Sometimes Jon Bilbao could be defined by dropping the "n" of his first name, becoming "Jo" [phonetically similar to "Yo," in Spanish, which means "I" in English]. [laughter] But I don't want to attack his personal way of being, and I'd prefer to focus on the positive about him, which is a lot. Besides, he is dead, and I don't like to talk about anybody, and less about the deceased.

We were very different religiously and politically, but he was a very respectful and well-mannered man. So having a well-educated person made a difference in the program. It is not the same to have a person who gets angry very easily over anything, who is a dictator, and who provokes uneasiness in the group, because we were a group. He was the opposite—kind, always doing favors, and as I said, always welcoming people, by phone or in person. He was a true host, with a very heavy Spanish accent when he spoke in English, but despite that, you could follow the conversations easily. He was very positive and a good friend of Bill Douglass.

Jon and Bill did *Amerikanuak*. I believe that Jon did a number of chapters, but the English language and many other chapters were Bill's. As Bill says, that book, together with Linda White and Gorka Aulestia's dictionary, marked the beginning of the production of forty-something books published by the University of Nevada Press.

The fourth founder was Eloy Placer, who had the additional limitation of having lived less long. He died quite soon after arriving in Reno. He taught Spanish in the Foreign Languages Department and specialized in Pío Baroja. He was nearly executed in Spain because of his pro-Basque sentiment and his past. He was denounced by the parish priest of Aguarain, but the priest recanted his lies. Eloy's mother kneeled down to beg the priest for forgiveness. One of his brothers was executed, and the other—the father of the priest Félix Elecea, very famous in Vitoria today—died on the frontlines.

Eloy's prison sentence was pardoned, but they made his life impossible once he left prison, where his brother had been executed together with the great poet Lauxeta [Esteban Urkiaga, 1905-1937]. Eloy went to Valencia and married a girl from there. Then he ended up in Reno after studying in Louisiana and teaching Spanish at various universities.

To me, each one of the four had contributed different things, but all of them were very interesting people. Then, a lot of people came through the program. Everyone within the limits of their capabilities has contributed something, beginning with the magnificent Linda White, Marcelino Ugalde, Joxe Mallea, and many more.

During my time in the mid-1980s, the Basque Studies PhD program was established. In that decade I believe that this event was very important. For the first time in America, there was the possibility of doing a PhD in Basque studies. I remember that the first two graduates were myself in Basque literature and later Joxe Mallea in Basque history. The third graduate was Linda White. I read Linda's dissertation, and I think that I got an invitation to be part of her committee, but I couldn't go to her defense due to a death in the family or a family problem.

The first evolution in Basque Studies was the PhD Program. The second was the library, which kept growing. Jon Bilbao retired and went back to the Basque Country. During those years he was spending more and more time in Algorta, and while in Algorta, he used to go to Vitoria to continue working on his bibliography. However, Jon didn't stop sending us books through his old contact, Karlos Zarraga [Jon Bilbao's main Basque book dealer, who retired in 2006]. I don't know how many thousands of books we received. After Jon left, another librarian came, María

Otero-Boisvert, who was here for a short period of time. I think that she was Cuban or born in Cuba.

In relation to the personnel, I don't see the growth today that it had during those years with Joseba Zulaika. After I left Reno I came back twice—in 1995 and in 2003 for two or three days each time. I haven't maintained much direct contact with the program. I am very thankful, but in the Basque Country I became involved in other projects. I continue to be a professor, a member of Euskaltzaindia, and coeditor of the journal *Revista de Sancho El Sabio*. I continue to write, to publish books and papers, and I am very happy with my family.

To tell the truth, on my last trip in 2003, I saw everything—materially, physically, structurally—very changed, and this gives a very favorable and positive impression. Even the names of the Basque Studies Program and the newsletter have changed. And of course, there is more space and more personnel. Sandra Ott and Joseba Gabilondo [Associate Professor with Basque Studies, 2001-2005] were there, and there were four rooms around the office manager, Kate Camino. And Marcelino Ugalde was there with his library in the old offices where Jon Bilbao and Linda White had previously been and where I had worked for thirteen years. I also remember the very favorable recommendation letters that I did for Gabilondo, who later on did not get tenure. I was sad about that.

Under Joseba's directorship a series of interesting projects have been created, and I hope Gloria Totoricagüena, the current director of the center, will continue them. [Gloria Totoricagüena was director of the Center for Basque Studies from January 2006 to September 2007, when she resigned her position and left the University of Nevada, Reno to pursue other opportunities.] I met Gloria in 2003, and I saw her again at the Basque Book and Music Fair in Durango in 2006, but I don't have any correspondence with her, so I don't know her plans or where the program is heading. Many others, such as Gregorio Monreal who went after me and came back for a sabbatical year, had more contact with Bill.

During Franco's time and even today, the Basque Studies Program and the Basque Studies Library have been very important. I am not going to play with semantics like others do, "So, this library is the best, the one from there is the best, and we are the best." Well, it is one of the best libraries including the

ones inside and outside the Basque Country. During Franco's regime two CIA members came to the Basque Studies Program, and they wanted to know what the program was doing. This reflects on the significance and importance of the then new-born, small program. I know that the CIA didn't obtain anything that could damage the Basques and the Basque Country.

Culturally, today's center is the most significant regarding Basque studies. Outside the Basque Country the center is and will continue to be very significant for many years, unless a catastrophe happens—for example, if a director of the program undoes what William Douglass and others have built, though I don't think it will happen if it hasn't happened in forty years.

There are *euskal etxeak* [Basque community-based clubs], picnics, and parties all over California and Latin America, and now they are starting to introduce the Basque language, and that's great. Folklore is very good, but as Xabier Lizardi [José María de Aguirre, 1896-1933] used to say, he was not totally satisfied with only having the Basque *pelota* [handball game], the *txapela* [beret], and the *alpargatas* [espadrilles or sandals whose soles are made of rope], but he also thought you needed the Basque language. So, in the Basque Country we have not only the language, but we have also developed history, anthropology, and different fields in relation to the Basque culture.

In 2006 I was in Durango at the Basque Book and Music Fair, and there were literature and history books published by the center that weren't translated into English in my time. Today the cultivated world speaks in English. Forty or fifty years ago it spoke in French.

If the Basques want to tell something to the world we have to say it in English. So, if we want to be known, if we want to play our little flute, that is, the small language of our small country in the global orchestra, we have to use the language that the majority can understand; and today one of the most important languages is English. That's why I was committed to finishing the dictionary. That's why it is essential to translate and to have a dictionary like the one produced by Linda and me.

I think it was a very important decision, and in many aspects it was against my better interests. If I had decided to leave the dictionary in the "H" letter and return to the Basque Country to earn more money, who would have finished it? I think that there

will be more and even better dictionaries, but somebody had to take the first step.

So there is a need to use the English language in everything. Maybe in the future we will have to use the Chinese, Indian, or Russian languages. However, while the United States remains the economic power, the English language is the one to be imposed on the colonies, and not precisely by England or London.

Looking back, I don't remember taking part in important decisions regarding the Basque Studies Program, so I never felt that I was a 100 percent qualified member of the Basque Program as others could be, because my future was in another place. In that sense, I have never felt like a Jon Bilbao. I don't blame Bill. Jon became a friend of Bill's, but I have never felt that I was his friend. I was a worker, a co-worker, particularly on the dictionary project, teaching Basque, or writing papers. As Jon Bilbao wrote in a prologue for one of my books, "With the diligence of a missionary he writes book reviews for the journal *World Literature Today*."

For example, Bill called for a meeting in a casino, because Sandra Ott, until then the director of the studies abroad program, had resigned. The subject to be discussed was whether the new director should know Basque. Jon, Bill, Laxalt, and I were at the meeting. I had something to say, and I said it. And the four of us, even Jon who was the toughest one, agreed on demanding that the new person should necessarily know Basque. However, Félix Menchacatorre was then selected as the replacement for Sandra Ott, but he didn't know Basque. [Félix is still the director of USAC in the Basque Country.] So then you ask yourself, what value are your thoughts if no one takes them into account? They tried their best, maybe.

I don't know why this happens, maybe because of the years that you are a student and you are treated as such. So I cannot see why calling you "PhD" means that the previous personal relationships have to change. I have never psychologically overcome that period. I always considered myself a second-rank person, and this didn't bother me, because I have never had any obsession about becoming rich or progressing. On one occasion I told Bill, "You are paying me this much, and lettuce cost that much last year, and the cost of living is increasing."

The poor man said, "We don't have any money, so be happy to have lettuce. At least you have lettuce to eat."

I think that others such as Joxe Mallea and Marcelino Ugalde, whose first Basque course I taught when he was eighteen, have had it much worse than me. I cannot complain. This is not about complaining. In a similar situation, I thought that Linda would stay there as the director of the program, but I was mistaken. More than once I told her, "Look Linda, don't think that I am interested in the program because one day I want to be the director. I don't want to be anybody here. I want to finish my obligations and go back. Right now, Linda, if you learn Basque you would be a very important person in the program." (I never told her that she would be the director of the program.) It distresses me the way she ended up.

However, Bill always respected my decisions regarding the work on the dictionary. For example, a person who later on finished a Basque-English dictionary went to Reno to explain his work, but his proposal was totally wrong. So I told Bill not to bring me anybody like that, and he respected it. In that sense, Bill saw that the dictionary was taking too long, and that the expenses were increasing, but he never rushed me to finish. Bill knew I would begin working before he used to get there, and he knew that the dictionary project was too slow. However, he never ideologically or philosophically, in any sense, rushed me or bothered me. I am very grateful to him for that.

Bill always encouraged me to keep writing book reviews and all that, but he never consulted with me on any serious decisions about the program. So you are respected there to a certain degree and even positively valued, but without any possibility of saying something about the management and about the innovations that could be built within a common and shared house.

Basque studies, identity maintenance, and nationalism

Basque studies is Basque culture to me. I am a native Basque speaker, but I am not saying that the *most* important element within the Basque culture is the language. I am not going to say that it is the soul or the spirit of the Basque people. However, within the constituent elements of Basque identity, I give the Basque language capital significance, because I am a native speaker, and I was born and grew up with such living experiences



"He never ideologically or philosophically, in any sense, rushed me or bothered me. I am very grateful to him for that." Gorka Aulestia and Bill Douglass at the Eloy Placer Memorial Reading Room, Basque Studies Program, 1982. Placer's portrait is on the wall behind them.

and sentiments. I wouldn't like to live in a Basque Country *without* Euskara. Maybe I would immigrate into another country and establish something to teach the language. I enjoy speaking in Basque.

I think Basque studies influence Basque identity. What has happened to the Native Americans in California and Nevada and particularly with the Paiutes? What remains on the reservations? A group of alcoholic people? Culture would make us free. Culture would make us free and Basques, while it keeps going.

Let's think a little bit about what we were or about our nineteenth-century *betsolaris*. The majority of them didn't know how to read or write. For example, Xenpelar [Juan Frantzisko Petrarena, 1835-1869] and Txirrita [José Manuel Lujanbio, 1860-1936] only knew how to read but not how to write. (I talk about this in my book, *The Basque Poetry Tradition*.) Let's think about my sons-in-laws, who are ten or fifteen years younger. They had

to take their exams in the University of Valladolid, because we didn't have a Basque university system; we didn't have a public television company. We didn't have anything, anything. My wife had to go to University of Zaragoza to do her bachelor exams.

Then since the death of Franco we have recovered our culture. We have a public university with maybe 60,000 students. We have a public television system with two channels—one only in Basque—and a network of *ikastolas* [Basque-language schools]. My son, who was born in America and came to the Basque Country when he was three months old, did his whole high-school degree in Basque, and my nephews from Ondarroa did their university degrees in fine arts and music in Euskara.

So all this undoubtedly influences our identity. Today, things that we couldn't imagine forty years ago come to be. Culture would help us to preserve and maintain identity, and in turn identity—as more identical we are and more Basque we are—would demand more culture. It is happening the same politically.

I know a person who has written thousands of pages in *Deia* [the Basque Nationalist Party's daily newspaper] since 1980. He wasn't young then, and his ideas about the Basque Country have evolved from being an autonomist, a federalist, to pro-independence. Twenty years ago, he thought that the independence of the Basque Country was absurd; however, today he accepts it with total normality.

I am not from any political party. My party is my land, my small nation, and above all the culture of this small nation. I see nationalism as positive. I have said all my life that I am nationalist and pro-independence, but in order to achieve this I don't have to break up with France or Spain, and I don't have to kill anybody. We need peace, and we need dialogue.

More nationalism for this small country doesn't mean that on the day of independence we have to get rid of those people who came from Burgos [a neighboring Spanish province] or from elsewhere, but much the opposite. The people from Galicia built our sewer system during Franco's time, and the people from Extremadura built our streets, and the children of those people from Extremadura—like my friends from Otxarkoaga—only go to Extremadura during summer vacation to visit their few remaining relatives. They feel as Basque or even more Basque than me. So, I wouldn't say that there is a worse or better sense

of identity because of more nationalism. It is the same identity that the rest of the nations have.

Here [in the Basque Country], for example, we feel weird about the Basque language. You go to any public office in Paris, and the logical thing is that they speak to you in French. And in Stuttgart and in Frankfurt, in Germany, the logical thing is that they speak to you in German. Here, still, in that sense we need more culture and more identity.

I remember a person asking me, "How do you feel, because in Spain . . . ?"

I told him, "I don't know what you think and how you feel about Spain, but since I was a child I don't feel Spanish—witnessing how my dad was tortured and the prisons and the blood and the dead and so on. I have a Spanish passport because it was imposed on me, but I don't feel Spanish."

In this regard, I tie identity and culture very closely in understanding nationalism as having a positive connotation. But I am not in favor of exaggerated or radical nationalisms, because we know where the twentieth-century radical nationalisms took us. I am very much against all those perversions. The good wine from La Rioja is good as long as you drink it moderately, but if you drink it too much, you get drunk, and you end up committing monstrosities.

I'd say yes to nationalism, but always in consideration of other things. We don't need to be against the French and against the Spanish, because they have good things to teach us—literature, gastronomy, geography, history, and so on. So I do believe there is a direct relation of cause-effect, effect-cause between both nationalism and identity.

Notes

1. In 1937, Gernika experienced the first deliberate aerial bombardment against a civilian population in Europe. The attack was conducted by the Nazi Condor Legion under the command of General Franco.

2. See for example Gorka Aulestia, "Lo Vasco y los Vascos en la Universidad Americana—What is Basque and the Basques in the American Universities," *RIEV* 43:1 (1998): 83-109.

3. See Robert Laxalt, *A Private War: An American Code Officer in the Belgian Congo* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998).

JILL BERNER

*J*ill H. Berner was born in 1948 in Modesto, California. She obtained a BA degree with a double major in fine arts and Spanish language and literature at the University of Nevada, Reno in 1970. Later she pursued graphic design studies at Truckee Meadows Community College. Jill has been working for the past thirty-one years at Basque Studies, which makes her the longest-standing member of the center. At present, she is the Webmaster, newsletter editor, and publications production specialist of the center. Since 1997 Jill has served on the UNR Balloon Race Scholarship Committee (chair in 1999 and 2000), and she is currently the president of the University Toastmasters Club. In 2000 the Women's Resource Center honored Jill for her distinguished service to UNR.

A tiny, little space, a tight-knit group of people

When I first heard about the Basque Studies Program in the late 1960s, early 1970s, I was a student at UNR. I used to work in the main library, where Basque Studies was housed. After I graduated, I worked for a couple years in the circulation department as a library assistant. Then I applied for a job in



Jill Berner, 2007

Basque Studies in 1975, and in January of 1976 I was hired to work at the Basque Studies Program. They knew that I spoke Spanish, because I had majored in Spanish and art, and that's why I got hired. They really thought that knowing Spanish was a big plus. They needed someone to do clerical duties and to answer the phone—not that it was that busy here, but they wanted some additional help. At first I was working half-time, maybe twenty-five hours a week, as an administrative aide or administrative assistant. I had a small child, Thomas,

who was one year old, so that was all the hours I wanted. After a while they offered me thirty hours a week, and then when my son was a little older I started working full-time.

I just remember that the Basque Studies people were a pretty tight-knit group. At that time there was Virginia Chan Jacobsen, who was half-time assistant coordinator of the Basque Studies Program and my immediate supervisor; Bill Douglass, who was the coordinator of the program; and Jon Bilbao, the Basque bibliographer. Gorka Aulestia was also here. He came to Reno because his wife, Mertxe de Renobales, had some kind of a *beca* [scholarship] to do a PhD in chemistry, or maybe it was post-doctoral research. Gorka had decided to do a master's in French while he was here. They stayed on, and Gorka became our first PhD in Basque Studies. He used to come around quite a bit, because, obviously, he was Basque, and he was interested in the program.

We had a couple of students working for us, and one or two volunteers who would come in from time to time, too. It was pretty well staffed.

When I got here in 1976, there were already quite a few elements of the program in place, and it just went on from there. That small staff did everything. Bill was the one who had the whole vision to expand into a lot of different areas. They already



"I just remember that the Basque Studies people were a pretty tight-knit group." Basque Studies Program faculty and staff picnic at Whitaker Park, Reno, c. 1976-1977. Left to right, standing: Jill Berner, Norman Silver, and Jon Bilbao. Middle row: Colette Etchart, Virginia Chan Jacobsen, and Helaine Hess. Front row: unidentified.

had the newsletter and the Basque Studies Library going, although it was pretty tiny at the time. They had acquired the Veyrin collection, and Jon was cataloging it in our kind of haphazard way that we cataloged things at that time. [laughter] We didn't have a professional cataloger, so maybe *haphazard* isn't a good word, but we had to do a rather abbreviated form of cataloging. During those first years Bill and Jon went out and did research on Basques in the American West, and Bill also went to Australia. Bill and/or Jon would go out and give lectures and presentations in the community and even further away in Nevada, like Elko and Ely.

We were downstairs in the basement of Getchell Library, in two of those little classrooms along the east wall, which are now study rooms, near where the Multimedia Center is today. I think it's called Lower Level Two. The building was smaller then. They



"We were downstairs in the basement of Getchell Library, in two of those little classrooms along the east wall, which are now study rooms." The Basque Studies Program's periodicals room, 1977. Jon Bilbao is at the center of the picture, and Jill Berner is at the back with unidentified visitors.

didn't have this whole half of the building that we're in now. Virginia and I were in one room, and Jon and Bill, I believe, both had desks in the other room, or at least Jon did. The library collection was just lining the walls of these two rooms. That was all the space we had. I was surprised that the Basque Studies Program was so tiny and its library collection was really small. The books were just jammed, filling the whole wall space. Whenever we had a big project to do, like mailing the newsletter, we had to go outside into the main room of the library and work on those big tables.

We were in those two rooms until April of 1977, when they moved us up to what was then the new section. The library doubled its size. We were given that corner, Room 274 and a couple of adjacent rooms, where we were for many, many years. So suddenly we had a lot more space, and the library started to expand. We had some storage space out at Stead then, too, where the main library has its storage area.

I started doing some quasi-secretarial-type things. I just did some typing—letters and forms and maybe purchase orders. I remember that they were working on the newsletter, and Virginia asked me to translate an article that Gorka had written in Spanish on his experiences as a priest somewhere in Africa.

I didn't know a lot about the Basques, so it was interesting to every day learn a little more—some unusual fact about the Basques and their origins—just from listening to Bill, Jon, and Virginia. I remember Virginia would tell me about how they didn't know anything for sure about the origins of the Basques. I would also check out the University of Nevada Press works on the Basques, and I would read them. I learned way more about the Basques than I had ever thought I would know in my life. It was a unique and interesting place to work.

People would always ask, "Why the Basques? Who are the Basques? What on earth do you guys do up there?" We were working in this building, but we were sort of the outsiders. I used to say we were the "ugly stepchild," because we didn't get much attention from the library—I don't think anybody else in the library knew for sure what we were doing or why we were here. [laughter] We were administratively part of the library at that time, but that changed, and later on we became part of the College of Arts and Science (now the College of Liberal Arts).

I met Virginia first when I was working in the Circulation Department in 1970, 1972, because she volunteered there for a little while, and then she found her niche in Basque Studies. She liked that a lot better. Back then, most of the professors were male, and UNR had a group called the Faculty Wives Volunteers that would volunteer in various departments on campus. (That's ridiculously sexist now.) Virginia was married, at that time, to Bill Jacobsen, who was a professor in the English Department. He was involved with Basque Studies to a degree, because, as a linguist, he had an interest in the Basque language. Virginia had a degree from Berkeley in anthropology, so she came into the program and started working about fifteen to twenty hours a week. She was a volunteer for a while, and then she was offered the job of assistant coordinator, half time, in 1974. She left in August of 1979. She and her husband divorced, and she moved to the Netherlands and remarried. [Today her name is Virginia de Rijk-Chan.] She's come back to visit a couple of times, because she has family in the San Francisco Bay area.

Virginia was great, and we became really good friends. We're still friends, and we still correspond, but not very often anymore. I remember we used to talk about cooking and recipes a lot! [laughter] Things that women talk about, I guess. She is Chinese-American; she had a lot of Chinese recipes, and she was interested in all kinds of food. She used to go on the Basque Studies Program Summer Sessions Abroad to help coordinate them, and she brought me a Basque cookbook. Oh! She loved Basque cooking. She said it was excellent. She was very impressed, and when she came back she would describe the dishes they had eaten.

Virginia brought a lot of organization to the program. The term "absent-minded professor" comes to mind sometimes when I think about Bill and Jon. Bill and Jon were good friends, but they were very different. I think Virginia was, on some days especially, in many ways like the "den mother" that was trying to keep everybody on track, because we would lose things, forget things. We were often on a hunt to find some lost paper or who had the camera last or where we had put it. [laughter]

Virginia would try to keep everybody organized, and she taught me an awful lot about work ethics in general. I guess I



Virginia Chan Jacobsen, 1977. *"I think Virginia was . . . in many ways like the 'den mother' that was trying to keep everybody on track, because we would lose things, forget things."*

was pretty green when I started working here. I had worked as a library assistant for a few years downstairs, and that was the extent of my work experience. She taught me a lot about the working world, about the university, how the system works, and about public service and answering the phone—just the little details of carrying out your job. She took the time, and I was really grateful for that.

From library work to publications: life with computers

At some point after we moved up to the new library section in 1977, I became a library assistant, because that's what I had worked at previously after college. They offered me the opportunity to help in cataloging—what they called cataloging. We didn't really catalog the books. It was sort of an ad hoc, seat-of-the-pants cataloging operation. Jon assigned every book what he called a "B" number. It was "B" and a chronological number. I guess he started with one, with the first book they ever got, and went on through however many thousands of books they had. He wrote that number inside the book in pencil, and then we typed the number, the author, the title, and the publication data on the card. We made a couple copies of the card using carbon paper for each book. This was back in the old days! [laughter]

I can't remember what I did when, because the job and my title changed over the years. I got promotions a couple of times, so I have moved up the scale here and there. I was also the only clerical help for a long time, so I did a little of everything. After a while I was checking off the list when books would come in. We'd get the packages directly from Spain, and most of them were shipped in the bottom of a boat, so they'd come in months later. We'd have to check the packing slips and see if we got what we ordered.

At various times I have typed letters in Spanish, requesting serials. We did that a lot, because we'd miss issues. They'd skip an issue, or somehow the subscription would just cease arriving, and we'd have to try to reinstate it. I also typed about twenty pages of a vocabulary list for whoever was teaching the Basque classes at that time. I think it was for Rick Chiarito. He was a reference librarian in the library, and he actually taught Basque for a while, maybe one semester. I also helped with book cataloging and various library tasks that Jon had me do.

After Virginia left I was the office manager, too, for a while, and I did what Kate Camino is doing now, including handling the accounts for a few years. At that time we got the account data from the Controller's Office as these large, gray printouts on tractor-fed printer sheets, showing income, expenditures, et cetera. I was not a bookkeeper or an accountant of any sort, and for me it became kind of a challenge.

I did library work until Bill asked me to start doing the newsletter's layout, which was previously done by the university printing services. We have always published the newsletter twice a year, and Bill was the editor. He would also write most of the material, but sometimes we got input from other people, such as short articles. Virginia and I helped push that through the process.

The newsletter header was a *lauburu* [a four-headed cross], and we actually had the *lauburu* for the logo on our stationery. It was even a symbol for the Basque Book Series. Eventually the university wanted a unified look to their stationery, so we were no longer allowed to use the *lauburu*. We began using their little blue Nevada map. Eventually Linda became editor of the newsletter, and she provided the content, and I did the layouts.

We didn't have computers in the early days, so we typed everything on our IBM Selectric typewriters with carbon paper. I remember that was a pretty nightmarish deal. That was hilarious too. [laughter] The Oral History Program used to be in this area, Room 281, at Getchell, where we are right now. They were right down the hall from us, and Mary Ellen Glass, the director of the Oral History Program, had acquired an Osborne computer, which was one of the first PCs that were available. Bill had talked to her about it and thought that it sounded like just the ticket. By then, Gorka and Linda were working on the Basque dictionary together. So, the main reason for getting this computer was to input the Basque-English dictionary, because we had tons of data that, of course, had to be in a certain order. It would have been virtually impossible to do it in any other way.

For example, if you made a couple of mistakes using that IBM Selectric to type the vocabulary list, you had to start over on that page. You could use white-out to a certain degree, but if you left out a word, and they were not in order any more, you had to retype the *entire* page.

We thought that this sounded great, and Mary Ellen, Bill, Linda, and I went down to this computer store that sold the Osbornes, and we came back with one. It looked like a sewing machine case, and it had a handle on it, like a little suitcase almost. You opened this little case up, and the back part of it folded back, and there was this tiny little screen about eight inches across. [laughter]

Looking back on it, it was just incredible. We couldn't do that much with it. We had little floppy disks—they were pretty large actually, but not much storage on them—and Linda and I typed away on that. Lisa Tipton-Corcostegui also helped with the inputting of the first dictionary on that computer.¹ Another Basque-American student, Gretchen Holbert, also helped with some of the English definitions. Eventually, over time, things progressed. Thank God! The computer industry expanded very quickly, and we got a “real” computer after a while.



“We didn’t have computers in the early days, so we typed everything on our IBM Selectric typewriters with carbon paper. I remember that was a pretty nightmarish deal.” Jill Berner and Auriane Ugalde (back) at the Basque Studies Program’s office, 1970s.

Bill had finished his research in Australia and Italy, and he brought me a manuscript [*From Italy to Ingham: Italians in North Queensland*] and said, "The University of Queensland Press wants to publish this, but they want me to provide camera-ready copy—in other words, the whole book layout exactly as it will be printed. Can you do this?"

I said, "Well, I can find out how."

The university library had one computer person that was in charge of technical assistance for this kind of project, so I contacted him, and he said, "What you need to get is a program called PageMaker, and I can help you a little bit. There are a couple other people on campus using it."

We got this software program, and I taught myself by going through the workbook and getting help from a few other people on campus as I needed it. I learned how to lay out the book, and that was my first professional incursion into the book-layout and publishing field.

I later started taking graphic design classes at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), and I got a certificate in Graphic Design and changed my whole job. But it started out with doing that book layout for Bill, for the University of Queensland Press, in the 1990s.

Previously, I had worked on a couple other book layouts, because we were publishing an Occasional Paper Series way back in the 1980s. Linda and I worked together on Barbara Rosen's book on Arriaga, the Basque composer. The technology was way different then. We had to have a typesetter set the type up, and then we glued these printouts to sheets, the way we wanted them laid out, with the photos. It was much more primitive; it wasn't done digitally. Once we got the computer and the PageMaker program, things got a lot easier. It is funny how my library skills fit in here for a while, so I was using that, and then I developed these other computer skills.

From the Elderhostel programs to Ikasi

We were not ever a completely academic, teaching department, although we always taught classes. We made it a goal to always teach Basque language and Basque culture. I think Jon was the first Basque language instructor, because Linda told me she took the class from him. Bill and Jon had tried teaching

a Basque language class at night, feeling that there might be interest among Basque-Americans in the community. I don't think that it was a huge success. They did have some attendance, but they only did that once or twice and then went back to the regular daytime schedules. Bill taught a Basque culture class a few times. I know Jon also taught Basque history then.

I don't think we needed to teach more at that time. The university was a lot smaller then, and we just didn't have the staff. They were focusing on other things, and I don't think there was a huge demand for the Basque courses. Bill just didn't see that as a big part of our mission. He always said we're a research entity, not a teaching entity.

We used to have Elderhostel programs in the 1980s. We did one program, I think, every summer or every other summer for several years. It was a national program. I think it still exists, and the organizers hold programs on different campuses all over the country. It's geared toward retired people or people over fifty-five. Usually, they would set aside housing in dormitories for these people. A lot of the programs were held in the summer when the campuses had more resources available in terms of classrooms and dorm rooms.

Our program was about one week long, and it gave just a smattering of information on various aspects of the Basques. Jon would give a couple classes on history. Someone would give a couple classes on the language or would teach a few words, a few phrases, or just talk about its origins or the syntax. They'd teach anthropology, the culture, of course, for a couple hours here and there. Then, in the evenings they had sessions on things like how to play the Basque card game *mus*, and Jon was a really popular *mus* teacher, because he'd teach them how to cheat. [laughter] Isn't that a key part of that game? I haven't ever played it myself, but there are certain codes like a wink means I have a good hand. It's very similar to poker in terms of trying to bluff, and they pass little hints and codes to their partner.

Now, we do our own program called Ikasi, which is geared to any adults, especially Basque-Americans who are interested in learning a little more about the culture and history. It is also a week-long program. Ikasi and those Elderhostel courses are very similar in organization. Elderhostel stopped doing those programs here. I can't remember why, but they closed it down.

Twins, Darlene Ammons-Reed, and Linda White

Since Virginia had left in 1979, Basque Studies had to hire a new full-time assistant coordinator, and that was Darlene Ammons. Darlene worked at Basque Studies from 1979 to 1981. She later married Mike Reed² and started a different career. She passed away in 2004.

When Bill came back from Australia, he realized that the library operation wasn't going well and the clerical operation needed help. Bill had several grants during that period, as I recall. I know he had a career-development grant from the National Institute of Health, which was a five-year grant. He did a lot of research out of the country. That, I believe, was the grant that took him to Australia and Italy.

Then I went on maternity leave. I told Bill, "I am just going to take three months off, and I'll be back." So they thought they could get by. Then I called Bill back, and I said, "We've had a surprise. We have twins! I just don't think that we can find childcare that easily, so I am going to take a little more time." We didn't know we were having twins until the day they were born. It was too much to deal with, so I had to take nine or ten months of leave. Bill was very understanding about that and about my schedule going from part time to full time and back to part time for a while after I came back.

Bill decided, "Oh, my God, we better get somebody in here for a while." He asked around the library, and Linda White had been a library assistant in the Acquisitions Department previously and had left, because she was pursuing some other interests. He got hold of Linda and asked her if she wanted to come and work as a temporary employee. I remember Bill calling me at home to say, "Since you're going to be gone so much longer, we've decided to hire somebody to help out. We're thinking of hiring Linda White, and I hope that's OK." Maybe he thought I was going to feel threatened.

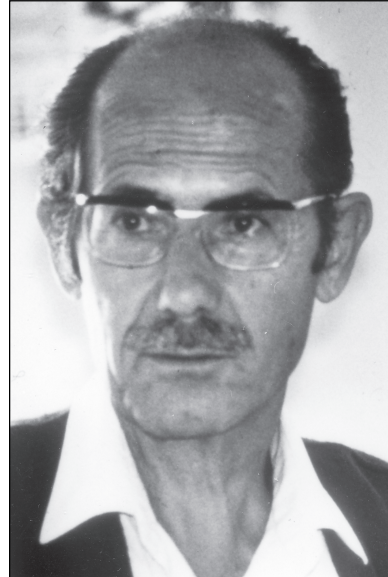
But I said, "Oh, I know Linda! Yes, we went to college together. I think that's great. She'll be great." She had worked on campus, which always helps, because you know the administrative ropes a little bit, the various departments and things you have to go through to get things done. My twins, Melanie and Megan, were born in November of 1980, and Linda was hired part-time in the spring of 1981.

UNR, at that time, was a much smaller place, so I knew a lot of people then. I was delighted that Linda was coming to work with us, and it was nice to reconnect with her. Linda and I knew each other as students a little bit already. We were casual friends through going to college together and being together in a couple of classes in the Spanish Department. We were also in a Spanish honor society together called Sigma Delta Pi.

We still joke about those Spanish classes. We had a class in Spanish literature—I think it was *Generación del Noventaiocho* [Generation of 1898]—which was taught by this older professor named Dr. Kline, who was just a nice, good-hearted guy. He was almost fluent in Spanish, but he spoke it with an American accent, which was horrible. I don't know, in those days, maybe they didn't learn conversation. We just had some funny anecdotes from that class that we would laugh about.

One of the most adored professors in the Spanish Department was Eloy Placer. Linda and I had also been in a couple of Eloy Placer's literature classes together. He was a wonderful professor. I remember being told that Eloy was a consultant for the program while he was here.

Eloy had a great sense of humor. [laughter] Linda and I often talked about the jokes Eloy made and the stories he told. Of course, at that level—it was third or fourth year—the whole class was given in Spanish, and he would occasionally tell little jokes, but Linda and I would usually be the only ones laughing, and the rest of the class didn't know what that meant. Were we the only ones who got the joke, or did we have a strange sense of humor, or what? He had been imprisoned by Franco during the civil war years, because he was on the "wrong side." I just remembered him telling stories about what he called "Franco's college," his



"One of the most adored professors in the Spanish Department was Eloy Placer." Eloy Placer (1914-1974).

years when he was in prison, because he studied or read quite a bit when he was there. Too bad that he is not here to tell his story, but he passed away in 1974 rather suddenly of a heart attack, before I started working here.

When I returned to work in September of 1981, Bill said, "Well, we are keeping Linda, because you really need another person to help out." They had decided that they needed the extra help, so they were going to keep her *and* me.

Linda and I were both library assistants, so that worked out really well. We both sat at desks across from each other with our Selectric typewriters. We always chatted a little bit. We were both working on cataloging at one point and answering phones and so on. Linda has a hilarious sense of humor. She's just wacky, and we used to be laughing half the day. I think sometimes Bill would come in, and we were laughing, and he probably thought, "Good Lord! I've hired a couple of lunatics! Are they ever going to get any work done?" But we did. We managed to get our work done. [laughter]

Later on, when Linda was working on the dictionaries, we hired Jeanne Harris to help out with the office tasks. She was here from 1984 to 1987. Then Joan Brick became the administrative assistant until 1995. In about 1998, Kate Camino was hired as the office manager and has been a real boon to the Center. She is fluent in Basque, French, and Spanish, and is a Basque-American with many ties to the Basque Country as well as the U.S. Basque community. Her expertise is invaluable.

Linda eventually went on to work on the dictionary projects, and she had a phenomenal career path in this place. I remember Gorka and Linda working on the dictionary. They would go to the back of the library and sit at a table by the window, so they had the natural light, and just work for hours and hours. It sounds like an exhausting schedule, but they got that project done.



Joan Brick, 1990

Linda got her PhD and went on to be a professor and to teach Basque. She was also the assistant coordinator for a while, and she did a lot of administrative things. [Linda was the assistant coordinator from 1989 to 1999.] Linda retired in June 2006, and it has been great working with her all these years. Linda and I have become great friends.

Unfolding the Basque Studies Program: USAC

The development of USAC (University Studies Abroad Consortium), which came out of our Basque Studies Summer Session abroad after Carmelo Urza took over, has been one of the major developments in the history of the Basque Studies Program. Bill and Jon started our study abroad programs back in the 1970s, and that became more and more structured after



"Linda has a hilarious sense of humor. She's just wacky, and we used to be laughing half the day. I think Bill would come in, and we were laughing, and he probably thought, 'Good Lord! I've hired a couple of lunatics!'" Jill Berner and Linda White, March 2006.

Carmelo came onboard in the early 1980s. We took students or teachers, anybody who wanted to go, to the Basque Country for a six-week summer session. Jon made a lot of the arrangements, because he had a lot of contacts over there, and Virginia also helped a lot with organizing this. In fact, she and Jon would go to the Basque Country and assist. They also hired various people over there who spoke English to teach. I know Yon Oñatibia was involved with teaching music and dance, and Jon Bilbao taught Basque history and maybe culture, too.

Oñatibia participated in at least one or two of the summer studies abroad programs. He also taught in the early years of NABO's summer music camp for children [today's Udaleku program]. When anybody mentions his name, I always picture him holding the drum and playing the *txistu*. Somebody took a picture of him when he was here one time, and Virginia painted a portrait from that. It's hanging in the Basque Library.

After Virginia left, she took up painting, and she did several portraits, which are hanging in the library. I think the first one she did was the one of Oñatibia, who she was very fond of, and Jon Bilbao was next, because they were very close friends. She painted a delightful portrait of him, and then the one of Bill. I think she did it from a photo; I don't remember. She brought the painting with her once when she came to visit.

The Study Abroad session was a popular program, but we only ran it every three summers. It was a pretty humongous undertaking, administratively and also for our people to have to pack up and go over there.

I met Carmelo when I started working at Basque Studies. Carmelo was a master's student at UNR. I think he got his undergrad degree in Idaho and came here and did a master's,



"When anybody mentions his name, I always picture him holding the drum and playing the txistu." Portrait of Yon Oñatibia by Virginia Chan, 1989.

because I remember him visiting the program a few times. Of course, being Basque, he was just magnetically drawn to us. All the Basques ended up in our office at some point. [laughter] Then he went off to grad school to do a PhD.

I guess when the Studies Abroad summer program became too much work for us to handle, Bill thought of Carmelo to come back to Reno and run the Summer Abroad program, and he expanded it into a semester- and year-abroad program.

Carmelo needed space, so Bill talked Special Collections into giving us a little office, and he actually had them divide it in two. We might have had to pay to build the wall and knock out another door. Bill was always finding creative solutions to all these problems. So Carmelo started running the program out of those two offices, but he eventually ran out of space.

I remember Carmelo wanted to have a contest to name this new entity that he was creating out of our little summer program. I think he thought of the name himself, so it just became a defunct contest, but for a while we were all trying to think of names for it. He thought of University Studies Abroad Consortium, and he liked it, so he was the winner of his own contest. [laughter]

Then Carmelo moved into the office where we are now—Oral History had been here for years—and quickly expanded. I'd come down here to talk to somebody, and they had at one time twelve or fourteen people all working in here, cubicle after cubicle, with wires and phone lines running all over the floor. There were two offices where



Jon Bilbao and Jill Berner at the Basque Studies Program's office in the new section of the Getchell Library, c. 1979-1980. The Basque *ongi etori* sign at the top of the entrance door welcomes all.

Gloria Totoricagüena and Xabier Irujo [Assistant Professor at the Center for Basque Studies since 2006] are now, and the rest was one open room. It was really chaos. I don't know how they did that for as long as they did.

So, of course, after a while Carmelo was out of our bailiwick, and the university made USAC a whole separate entity. Then USAC moved over to the Old Gym building where they are now. They have a big area there, and they've probably taken more and more territory over there. It was fun having them around, though, for a while. We have close ties with Carmelo, not only because of all the friendships over the years, but because he is tenured under the Center for Basque Studies, so we count him as one of our faculty.

Expanding: visiting students, conferences, and the library

Another major event was when the Basque government started funding student exchanges, and that was one of the first connections we had with the Basque government. The Basque government started to have a more active role with the Basque diaspora, and there were some exchanges back and forth. We would bring a grad student from the Basque Country for an academic year, and the student would help out with our Basque classes and work on a project, maybe a thesis.

We had some good students. Nere Lete was one of the first students that came over in 1988. Then, I remember other visiting students such as Estibalitz "Esti" Amorrortu, Amaia Rekalde, and Javier "Javi" Cillero, who ended up doing his PhD in Basque studies. He was a wonderful guy, and we became very good friends. I was taking Basque language classes, trying to learn a little Basque to help me out in my job, and Javi took on the task of tutoring me twice a week. He would come in for an hour at lunch time to talk in Basque with me, and he taught me a lot, although I subsequently forgot much of it. He worked hard at trying to make me an *euskaldunberri*.

Meanwhile, we had a visit from Lehendakari José Antonio Ardanza in the late 1980s, and it was a big event for us. A few years later, Eusko Ikaskuntza [the Society of Basque Studies] from the Basque Country recognized our twenty-fifth anniversary by giving us an award.

In 1995 we had a conference about Basques in the Mexican regions [The Basques in the Mexican Regions: 16th-20th Centuries], and in 1998 we had a big international congress at the Riverboat Hotel and Casino [Basques in the Contemporary World: Migration, Identity, and Globalization]. We published three books in our Occasional Paper Series from the conference's proceedings. I didn't do the layouts for the three volumes, because we wanted all three done at once, and we were doing them on a tight deadline. I just oversaw the production. There were at least thirty or forty authors involved, and there was a lot of communicating with them and getting permissions. It was a big project.

We also had the library going, and the collection was increasing, because the main library started to give us a budget for books, which was something we hadn't had prior to that. I don't remember how we obtained some of those materials we had at the beginning. So Jon went into an extensive collection mode. He had made arrangements with a couple of book dealers, huge bookstores such as Linacero in the Basque Country, and later Urretxindorra, to just send us pretty much all the



"He was a wonderful guy, and we became very good friends. I was taking Basque language classes, trying to learn a little Basque to help me out in my job, and Javi took on the task of tutoring me twice a week." PhD student Javi Cillero and Jill Berner at the Basque Studies Library, September 1998.

mainstream material that there was in Basque or about the Basques or authored by Basques—anything and everything that was published. Of course, Basque publishing was just really starting to take off in the late 1970s, and then we quickly had a huge influx of materials.

We were getting large shipments of books every couple of months, and we had to unpack them, check them in, and check them off the lists, which they had sent previously, and we did that fast cataloging process. Actually, when I got here the cataloging department was helping out a little bit. There was a woman named Yoshi Hendricks who worked a few hours every week on some of our books, and she cataloged them fully and put them into the system. But there was not enough help to properly catalog everything. Gradually, over time, we had a little more help from the library, and they started taking that over, eventually, but that wasn't until they had hired the first Basque Studies Librarian, María Otero-Boisvert, in 1986.

María was here for three years before her husband decided to go back to school, and they relocated to Ohio or somewhere. So we hired another librarian, Ellen Brow, but there were some difficulties with her, and she left. We were in a bind, and Bill wanted somebody to come in who was knowledgeable about the Basques and maybe knew something about the collection already, and he talked to Marc Ugalde, who had previously worked with us as a student at UNR.

Marc was a local Basque-American from a big family, who grew up on a ranch in Fallon, Nevada. He was very practical, really laid back, down-to-earth, and a nice guy and very family oriented. Marc was, at that time, a teacher in the Washoe County schools, but he was burned out on teaching and was thinking about going to library school.

So Bill hired Marc as a library assistant to work as an interim person and take care of the collection while we thought about what to do. Marc went to library school, and he was able to do some of the studies as correspondence courses, and we actually helped him out with some of his library science courses. He went to Arizona to finish up, because there was a residency requirement, and he finally got his degree.

At that point, we were searching for a librarian, and Marc became one of the candidates, and he ended up being hired as the Basque Studies Librarian. Of course, the fact that he'd worked

with the library for a couple years helped his case. He had not only worked here as a student, but he'd worked as a temporary library assistant and as a professional. So he'd put in a lot of time and was dedicated to the Basque Studies Library and the whole Basque Studies arena. Marc always described it as his dream job. He was happy working here. All the visitors who used to come to Reno enjoyed working with him, because he knew the collection from top to bottom.

Marc was another very dedicated worker. I think everybody that's worked at Basque Studies has invested a lot of themselves in it, and because those who are Basque are into their heritage, this was just an ideal place for them. It had appeal for a lot of these people that really treasure their Basqueness. I mean, a lot of us aren't Basque, but we also have our reasons for being here and being interested and enjoying it.

The Basque Studies Program then moved into the College of Arts and Science, and I think it was a great move, because suddenly we weren't the ugly stepchild anymore! We had more financial resources, a little more attention from the overall administration and from the College of Arts and Science. Ann Ronald was the dean when we made that switch in the mid 1990s. It seems to me that she was the one who brought it up and said, "You guys should be over here."

Here we were, this very unique ethnic research program, which was considered a center of excellence, and they wanted us to join that college, so it was very flattering. It was more appropriate, too, for us to be in that college, rather than being part of the library, because even though the Basque Library was growing, the research and teaching side of Basque Studies didn't belong in the library—not that we had that much of a teaching mission at the time.

When they split the College of Arts and Science into the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science, of course, it made sense for us to go with Liberal Arts, although there was a moment of thinking, "Well, we could go with Liberal Arts, or we could go back with the library," but that essentially didn't make any sense.

When we went to Arts and Science, the Basque Library remained under the administration of the library. The split had some drawbacks, because even though the library and the program had remained close, we were split physically, and that

made a big difference. We used to all be in one area together, but it was no longer possible because of logistics with more and more staff on our end of things and a growing library and an increasing library staff.

The move helped the Basque Library in a way, because the library administration made more of an effort to put some resources into it. We already had a Basque Studies Librarian and a half-time library assistant and some student help in the deal through Bill's negotiations with the library administration. Then they also devoted one cataloger—I think at first it was half-time and maybe later full-time—towards cataloging the collection using the Library of Congress system. There was a huge backlog of Basque books to incorporate into the catalog, so the library requested a grant and carried out a two-year project in which they did incorporate a lot of that backlog. Kathryn Etcheverria was the librarian in charge of that project. So the Basque Library was developed a little more after that split.

There's always been talk, at least in the last fifteen years, of incorporating the Basque collection into the main library and just doing away with having this separate, physical space and separate support staff for it. But I think it would be a big mistake, because the way the collection is set up now, you have a person in charge who's at least theoretically knowledgeable about the Basques and the collection and can help researchers find what they need quickly, which really facilitates their work.

The Basque Library has a good reputation, so we do get a lot of researchers here. If the collection were broken up and just scattered throughout the library with no central support staff to provide for it, I think the interest on the part of researchers would evaporate. They wouldn't find it to be such a great resource anymore. The books would be there, but I don't think it would have the same appeal. There are a lot of old, rare materials there, too, so I just wonder how they would handle that. There's a big photo archive, slides, and ephemera, so I think it would be tricky to incorporate all of that into the other main library departments.

It's essential to remain in close proximity, because researchers not only want to use the library, but they want to network with our faculty, and that's a big part of the whole experience for them to come to Reno. They meet us, and we get to meet these people and interact.

Like home to me: Bill and Joseba

I have been with UNR for thirty years and working almost all that time for Basque Studies, and it's been wonderful. Since Bill has retired, I'm the longest-working human being now on staff. Wow! I never thought about being the senior member. I think that sounds too old. Can I be that old? [laughter] Yes, it seems strange. When I look back, I can't believe I've been here for thirty years. It's really *weird*, because it's a whole lifetime. I was a different person, and I was just a kid when I started here! My children grew up while I was working here, and now they're adults. They have finished college and are doing their own thing. A lot of my life is tied up in this place.

The thing that made my job continue to be interesting was the fact that it changed quite a bit over those years. Also, the people that I worked with and the visitors have always been wonderful. For the vast majority of the time we have had good people. It's been very rewarding over the years to meet a lot of different people from the Basque Country, and I've made some good friends. Also, we changed locations a couple times over that period.

I remember a couple times in my career, thinking, "Maybe I could earn more money somewhere else," and I became interested in graphic design. I have an art degree, but I had never used it much. As I said, I took the design courses at TMCC and changed my career. I actually thought for a while I might have to look around if I want to work in this field. I just lucked out when Joseba came onboard, because he wanted to stress the Internet and publications, get a good brochure printed, and change the design of the newsletter. So I was in the right place at the right time.

I think it would have been hard to change jobs, because Basque Studies has become like home to me after all these years. I looked around at other departments on campus and some other places, and they were run a lot differently and maybe more bureaucratically. I'm sure there were other interesting departments on campus, though, but I just didn't take that path in the end, so who knows? I wanted to stay in one of the public employment areas because of my retirement. My pension fund was by that point adding up, and I wanted to stay with the university or the county or some state entity.

We were a happy little family back then in the early days. We didn't have as many visitors from Europe back then, because we didn't have any formal arrangements like we do now with the Basque government. We used to celebrate birthdays, and Jon always brought champagne. That was his contribution! He always had a bottle of champagne. [laughter] We just had a pretty fun time. Jon was just a delightful person. He was great to work with and had a great sense of humor. He was very professional, very focused, and he accomplished an incredible amount of work with his Basque bibliography. I worked with him on that a little bit, typing the entries. He was really immersed in his work. He'd be up here on weekends and evenings. Gorka also was a great guy. Oh, my God! He was hilarious, too. He was just an incredible scholar, very intensely into his work.

There have been some amusing incidents over the years. When we were in Room 274, in that little office—well, not so little, compared to our origins—we set off the fire alarm in this building I don't know how many times. [laughter] Back in those days, you could still smoke in the offices, but not out in the more public areas. Of course, all these Basques here were smokers.



"We just had a pretty fun time. Jon was a delightful person. He was great to work with and had a great sense of humor." Jon Bilbao and Jill Berner at the Basque Studies Program, c. 1977.

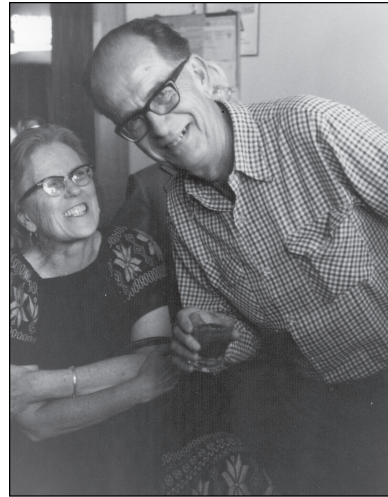
Jon was very polite, so he'd stay in his office and close the door and smoke a cigar once in a while, and I guess he threw the cigar stub in the trashcan, which, of course, had a plastic liner, and it started a fire and set off the smoke alarm. Every time the smoke alarm would go off, the *entire* building had to be evacuated—everybody on every floor, every student, and every worker.

Ken Carpenter was the head of Special Collections, and he was also in charge of building security. I sat at a desk that faced the door, and I would see him coming down the hall with this grim look on his face. He could look at the electrical panel and could tell where the fire alarm had started, and shaking his head he'd say, "Did you guys set off the fire alarm again?" [laughter]

Another time Gorka was on one of his rants. He would get on a subject and just go on enthusiastically about it. He was very intense. So this one time he was standing by my desk kind of waving this cigarette around and talking, ranting, and he had his hand up in the air, gesturing. Of course, the smoke alarms were up there on the ceiling, and the smoke from his cigarette, sure enough, set off the damn fire alarm! The bells started clanging, and here came Ken down the hall, glaring at us. "You guys did it *again*? I can't believe it!"

Every time they did that, the fire department had to come out to investigate, to turn off the alarm, and then give the all clear so everybody could go back to work. Then later, smoking was prohibited inside the buildings, and it was very tough! People had to go out in front of the building and have a cigarette. But it sure cut down on the fire alarms.

I've been awed at how much the center has grown and how much we've accomplished over that many years. It's just incredible. It was basically a



"The bells started clanging, and here came Ken down the hall, glaring at us. 'You guys did it again? I can't believe it!'" Pat and Ken Carpenter, August 1979.

tiny, little operation in a closet, practically, and now the library has expanded so much that it is bursting at the seams. We even have that area out at Stead where there are several rows of stacks filled with bound journals and children's books, things that they didn't have room to store up here.

I also think we've kept up with the university's progress. We've expanded right along with it, and, in fact, I'm amazed at the stuff that we're involved in and that we've been doing over the last ten or fifteen years. We've gotten involved in promoting Basque musicians to come here, Basque art exhibits, and even Basque theater. Our publications production has expanded under Joseba Zulaika's directorship. Now we have all these new book series that we're doing, above and beyond the Basque Book Series that was established at the University Nevada Press. We've been presenting conferences yearly now for the last few years, and we have a conference papers series. We've been publishing Basque literature in translation, the Basque classics, and, of course, the textbook series, which was the first one. We have about twelve textbooks to go with online classes that were developed over the last five or six years.

Our teaching agenda has expanded, too, and our courses have been incorporated into the Liberal Arts and the university's overall curriculum a little better because of cross-listing and because a couple of courses have been made capstone and diversity courses. This has increased the popularity of Basque Studies, and now the courses draw more students. I think that's great. More students get a little exposure to Basque culture, and a lot more people know who the Basques are and don't have to ask, "What the heck are you guys doing here? Why do we even have this program in Reno, Nevada? Basques? Why Basque Studies?"

Actually, we have gotten those questions many times. The Basque Studies Program and the Basque Library were all together at one point, and since I was answering the phone a lot, I would get a lot of those questions, and I would always say, "We are in Reno because the Basques are a significant minority in Nevada," and I'd explain a little bit about the origins of our program, about DRI wanting to add a human element to its research program, and about how they thought of the Basques and decided to create a program of study. To go along with that, of course, they felt it was necessary to have a research library; hence, the Basque Studies Library.

I would say, "We exist to research and publish our research about the Basques, mostly." I think there's been a lot of emphasis over the years on the Basque diaspora, because we have a unique opportunity to research that in the American West. Our main mission is still researching and publishing, and the teaching is becoming a little more important.

At the beginning of the program, a lot of people didn't know what a Basque was. Well, heck, when I started here, I have to say I knew next to nothing about the Basques myself! I was just a kid when my family moved to Reno, and I had lived here for quite a while, so, of course, I'd heard of the Basques. I don't think I had before then. We had eaten at the Basque restaurants, and we used to go out to Gardnerville to the Overland Hotel. Every time relatives would come into town, we'd take them out there. My mom was interested in *Sweet Promised Land*, so I had read it and learned a few things.

I never went to the Basque Country until 2003. The students that went on the summer session abroad would come back and be very enthusiastic, and everybody else would go and bring me a souvenir and tell me how beautiful and wonderful it was. So, finally, I went there to see it for myself. And it really is beautiful!

But I learned quickly working here. I picked up information here and there, and so I was able to answer some questions when people would call.

We would get the weirdest questions, too. I remember people would call and ask, "How do you say 'happy birthday' or 'I love you dearly' in Basque?" Stuff like that. I guess they were writing a card or a note to someone who was Basque. I think the most common question was from people who were Basque-American, asking about their surnames, the meaning of their name, and whether we had any information about their genealogy. The library has some reference works that have information about those things, so we would just go to the shelves and find the reference book and look it up and offer to send a photocopy of the information to them by mail. Or if people came in, we could photocopy something and give it to them or help them find the information sources.

Today, there is probably greater awareness about the Basques and the center, but I think, from talking to the former librarians, that they get a lot of the same questions, because I'm not in the question-answering end of the business anymore. In fact, we've

expanded our services quite a bit, because we're involved now with a grant that's funding a Basque genealogy project. I think they're going to be charging for those services, though, because it's on a more extensive and professional basis.

I worked with Bill for over twenty years, and he was a great boss, because he was not only very respectful and treated me very well, but he always allowed me to be flexible with my hours and work schedules, which was great. He is just a phenomenal person, a phenomenal scholar, and actually a businessman, too, because he was involved in his family's business for many years, and I think those skills were beneficial to the program. He has a great problem-solving ability and was very focused on his research. He'd come into the main office, and if you threw a question at him or maybe made a funny remark or a joke, sometimes he would kind of look at you strangely. He was focused on his work and not on whatever nonsense we were babbling about. [laughter]

Bill's record speaks for itself—I mean, the things he's done with the center. In addition, I found him to be a wonderful human being, very understanding, compassionate, always reasonable, and he treated everyone well and respectfully, as long as we were respectful and did the job right. I always appreciated the fact that he had a lot of confidence in me. He would ask for a certain result or for some project to be completed, and then he would let me decide how to do it. He was not a



"We would get the weirdest questions, too. People would call and ask, 'How do you say "happy birthday" or "I love you dearly" in Basque?'" Jill Berner at the Basque Studies Program's office, 1980s.

micromanager. I like working with someone like that, who doesn't try to totally control everybody else's work life. We had a good working relationship, and I think he would agree with that.

Bill's also a very private person. He kept his personal life very separate from his work life, but occasionally, he would have parties at his house, and the whole office group would go over there with any visitors that happened to be around at the time. He and his wife, Jan, were wonderful hosts, and then you saw a different side of him, because he became really jovial and told fabulous stories about his travels and research. It's been a pleasure working with him over the years.

I think that towards the end of his career here, Bill was ready to turn the management of the program over to somebody else. He had taken on a lot of projects and started a lot of initiatives with Basque Studies. The researching and writing were his favorite thing—not the administrative end of things, but he had done a very good job of both. Bill would charge the staff and the faculty with the need to start some new initiatives. He was a little tired of always carrying the ball and always being the idea man.

When it came time for Bill to retire, we changed the title of coordinator to director, and we changed the name of the Basque Studies Program to the Center for Basque Studies. An outside group of scholars, including the late Begoña Aretxaga, Robert Clark, and Jacquie Urla, scholars not connected with the Basque Studies Program, did an evaluation of the program—an external review, required by UNR on a periodic basis—and they recommended that we change its name to reflect its basic research mission. They made some other recommendations as well, namely that UNR give us some more money and a couple more faculty positions, which became a thrust after that. The university was forced to look at this, obviously, and took it as seriously as they did any of these outside reviews.

Then the faculty got together and wrote new bylaws. The faculty decided that the directorship should rotate every three years, so no one person was either burnt out with the management of the program or glorified with it or whatever you want to call it. I think that a lot of departments do it this way, because it is an administrative burden in a way. Whoever is the director for that period of time takes a big administrative role and doesn't have much time to do research. They discussed

among themselves who would take on that role, and Joseba Zulaika was chosen as director for the period. His term started with 2000, the new millennium.

Joseba was hired as a faculty member in 1990, but he had been conducting postdoctoral research projects in Reno since the early 1980s. All these people that came to UNR in their youth for a temporary stay—we all got sucked into the vortex, didn't we? [laughter] There is a trend there. A lot of us came here as students and just kept reappearing or eventually signed on for the long run.

In March of 2000 we moved from Room 274 over to the room that had been Oral History and then USAC, Room 281, because we were running out of space. We remodeled it, at our own expense, into six little offices and a main reception area. It physically separated the library operation from the administrative and faculty offices for the first time in the history of the Basque Studies Program.

The amazing thing about Joseba is his energy. He's just like a whirlwind. He became director, and I think he thought, "I can't keep following Bill's footsteps. I've got to reinvent this thing." That whole idea of the new millennium and the new century was being talked about everywhere, and all the changes that were taking place. Joseba was motivated to make his own mark and take things to a new level. There's probably a lot of pressure on a new director to do that, instead of just following the same path.

Joseba had a lot of innovative ideas, and one of the most impressive things he did was to get a couple more faculty positions. It was the right idea at the right time. It's just phenomenal the way that all fell together, and this little, tiny program ended up convincing the legislature to grant us the funding for two new positions. Consequently, we hired Gloria Totoricagüena and Joseba Gabilondo as the first two hires. After Joseba Gabilondo left, Sandra Ott was hired. Xabier Irujo and Marijo Olaziregi are recent hires, filling retirement vacancies.

Joseba started all kinds of new initiatives. One of the big things that he wanted to do was to have a larger web presence. The Internet by then was a much bigger entity, and every program and department on campus had a Web page. Linda White had created a Web page previously, just by doing the HTML and learning it on her own, so we already had a presence on the Internet, but not huge. Of course, whoever develops these

programs started coming out with new software programs to make it easier to do Web development and Web design.

So one day, Joseba said to me, "Why don't you take on a new project and put on a new hat and be the Webmaster for Basque Studies? I want you to redesign the Web site completely, and we want you to expand it." We involved a consultant, Martin Gastañaga, who had a Web company in town, and he helped us quite a bit, initially. Joseba was great at getting people to volunteer some time and to pick their brains. A designer in the Bay Area, Gunnlauger Briem, also did some preliminary work on it. Then, since I had taken some Web design courses at TMCC, I ended up doing much of the site design myself.

Then Joseba pushed the teaching and the publishing agenda quite a bit. He's pushed all of us to a new level, I'll tell you that! [laughter] He's raised the bar in terms of what's expected in the work pace around here, but we know how to have a good time, too. Every now and then we go out and raise a little hell. We've had a few dinners, and we've had conferences in town. But it's been stressful, too. Maybe it's partly because I am getting older, but all of us, I'm sure, would agree that we're doing more in less, or in the same amount of, time. It's something to be proud of, but sometimes you just want to rest a little and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Someday we'll hopefully be able to do that.

Under Joseba's term we always had meetings and were able to give our input, but the weight of the decisions fell on him, so he had to make the call most of the time, because he was the one who was going to take the heat if things didn't go well. So I understand that, and that's fine. Sometimes I think Joseba—well, everybody, a lot of these guys—took on more than our staff, our numbers, could efficiently assume. But we always pulled it off, or almost always. We've gotten ourselves obligated a few times and then said, "My God, what have we done?"

I remember Jon used to get us into obligations, too. I mean, it just happens. You feel you know these people, and you feel you owe them something, and you end up saying, "Yes. We'll bring you here give to a lecture, or we'll publish your book, or we'll do this, or we'll do that." I think that's how we ended up a lot of times in the last few years with some of the problems we've had. [laughter]

Joseba is extremely intelligent and a bit temperamental but a very loving, compassionate person, too. There is a lot of candor

there. One thing I have appreciated about working with Joseba is that I have always been able to talk to him very openly. I have never been afraid to tell him anything. At the same time, he always tells you exactly what's on his mind, and he's also willing to listen to you. A couple times he got mad at me, and I felt very free to get mad at him right back and tell him my feelings exactly on that subject. So you don't have to guess at what he's thinking or feeling at any given time.

The makeup of the staff has changed quite a bit in the last several years, and now that the directorship will change more frequently, it will be interesting to see how much balance and continuity we will maintain.

Notes

1. Lisa Corcostegui and her husband, Enrike Corcostegui, also a former visiting student at the Basque Studies Program, established Zenbat Gara Euskal Dantzari Taldea in 1989, the first-ever Basque student association at UNR. It is dedicated to the teaching and promotion of Basque folk dance. She completed a PhD in Basque studies (anthropology) in 2005.

2. Michael "Mike" Reed had been a UNR faculty member of the College of Business Administration since 1972 and dean from 1993 to 2006. Currently, he is Nevada System of Higher Education Vice Chancellor of Finance.

LINDA WHITE

*L*inda Louise White was born in 1949 in Scotia, in northwestern California. She obtained a BA degree with a double major in Spanish and French in 1971 and an MA degree in Spanish in 1975 from the University of Nevada, Reno. She earned a PhD in Basque studies, with an emphasis in language and literature, from the same university in 1996.

Linda spent nearly four decades at UNR. She worked at Basque Studies for twenty-five years, serving in a variety of positions, from library assistant and lexicographer to assistant coordinator, assistant professor, and associate professor. She is an avid language teacher, translator, and fiction writer. She speaks several languages fluently, including Basque, Russian, French, and Spanish.

In 1993 Linda was inducted into the Basque Hall of Fame by the Society of Basque Studies in America for her contributions to Basque culture, and in 2000 the UNR College of Arts and Science (today's College of Liberal Arts) awarded her the Mousel-Feltner Award for Excellence in Research and/or Creative Activity. She retired in 2006, and she is currently a Basque Scholar Professor Emerita at the University of Nevada, Reno.



Linda White, 2006

Like coming home

I first heard about the Basque Studies Program when I was an undergraduate student at UNR. One of my professors, Eloy Placer, was actually involved in the Basque Studies Program, and I did book searches in the library for him. Dr. Placer would give me cards to order for the collection, and a lot of them had to do with Basque things, so that was an interesting way to get information about the program.

Also, during my senior year in college I took an evening class from Jon Bilbao in Basque. We met

once a week, and everyone else in class was of Basque descent, retired and from the community. I took the class because I loved learning foreign languages, but the rest of the students just wanted to talk about cultural things. So I would get really frustrated, because I just wanted to speak the language, damn it! But it was an interesting and very pleasant class. I learned a lot, but I didn't really come away speaking anything, because that wasn't what the class was designed for.

I did a double major in Spanish and French and graduated in 1971. I went away for a year and came back to do my master's degree in French in 1972. My French was much stronger than my Spanish, but I absolutely hated French literature. I couldn't force myself to read it. I *could not* bear it. So the summer after my first year of graduate school, I took a bus to Mexico and stayed for six weeks in Saltillo, where I studied nothing but Spanish. I bought Spanish-language comic books to study vocabulary from, and I had a tutor for two hours a day. My tutor—I'm sorry I don't remember her name—absolutely hated the United States. [laughter]

I was very insecure and afraid of everything at that time in my life, and I dreaded meeting with her, because she was so anti-American. It was torture, but I had to defend my country. So all I did was talk two hours a day trying to convince her that not all Americans were from Texas. [laughter] I don't know if I made any headway, because she was obviously doing it for the money that I paid her. I don't care about the political impact, because I came home fluent in Spanish.

When I came back to Reno, I went to Dr. Placer's office, and I said, "I cannot stand to study French. I have to change my major for my master's to Spanish literature." He asked me why, and I said, "*Porque me da placer. Porque me da placer.* Because it gives me pleasure," which is his name translated into English. So, he got a kick out of that.

Then I went to see Eugene Grotegut, the chair of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department, who also taught German in those days. I told him that I was changing my major, and he said, "Well, Madame Fricke is going to be extremely upset with you."

I said, "Yes, I assume she will be!"

"Well, if there's any fallout, I'll do what I can to help you, but you have every right to study what you want to study."

So I changed my major to Spanish literature in the middle of my master's degree, and the French department went ballistic. [laughter] Dr. Fricke—we called her "Madame Freak"—decided that if I was not going to study French, I should not have a TA (Teaching Assistant) position. She made so much noise about it that the department revoked my teaching assistantship. However, Dr. Grotegut was such a nice man that he said, "Don't worry. You have a job." So he gave me twenty hours a week—basically my assistantship—and had me work in the language laboratory for the first semester. The language laboratory, at that time, was housed in Frandsen Humanities, but it was part of the Foreign Languages Department. So you didn't come to the library and do it at the media center.

By my second semester the department had another TA position for Spanish, and they gave it to me. I was very fortunate to have Dr. Grotegut, Dr. Placer, Dr. Nelson Rojas, and other people on my side. They were really great. I was so glad that I switched to Spanish literature. It was like coming home.

From what I gathered, Dr. Placer was in prison during the Spanish Civil War, and one of his brothers was killed in the war. (I was a student, so it was not like we sat and talked about his life on a personal level.) After the war he came to the United States in exile. He actually taught at the University of Louisiana. His wife's name was Pilar, and I think they had three children, but I'm not sure, because his older children were already grown. Only one of his sons came to Reno with him and attended school. I didn't know the family really well.

Dr. Placer would tell us stories about the war in our classes. He could tell which of us were improving in our Spanish and which ones weren't, because the ones who were improving understood his stories, and they would laugh about them. One day he said in class, "Did you know that I died during the Spanish Civil War?"

We're all sitting there, and about four of us were going, "What? That's impossible!"

He started laughing, and he said, "Yes." He received a letter saying that he had been killed in the Spanish Civil War, and the terrible part was that it was his brother who had been killed. So it was like his mother lost both her sons momentarily. It was very sad. He would also tell us old jokes, like *carne de lata*, which means "meat in a tin can." [laughter] Well, it doesn't make much sense in English. It's during the civil war, and two guys are talking, and one of them said, "What did you have for dinner?"

The other one said, "I had *carne de lata*," and he was a Chinese fellow, see.

And the first guy goes, "No. You couldn't have had *carne de lata*, because the food production has halted, and nobody has any *carne de lata*. Nobody has canned meat."

The Chinese fellow said, "No, no. You don't understand. I had *carne de rata*, *carne de rata*, 'meat of the rat,' the *rata* that *corre, corre, corre, corre* through the *calle*. Yes, run, run, run through the street." I guess it would have been funnier if I told the joke in Spanish.

What Dr. Placer told me one day really made an impression on me. At the time, foreign languages had a great big TA room. It was really an exciting place to be, but it was just loud and constant chatter. It was a *madhouse* in there. People were talking

all the time, and students were coming and going. All the TAs in Spanish and French—I don't think there were any German TAs—had a desk in this huge room. So Dr. Placer told me, "Our graduate Spanish students need to speak more Spanish, and you're the one to do it. I think you should start speaking Spanish in the graduate office all the time."

"Me? Why me?"

"Because you went to Mexico, you came back fluent, and you changed your major. Now, speak Spanish in the graduate room." And so I did. Pretty soon every time we walked in the door, we were either speaking Spanish or French. No English was allowed in the grad room.

So I finished my master's studies very happily. The saddest thing was that Dr. Placer passed away three months before I did my orals, and that was horrible. That was the worst week of my life. Well, I've lost family members, but he was so important to me in my education, and he just meant a lot to me. So it was hard to lose him. Then Dr. Gerald Petersen took over and chaired my committee, and I finished up in March of 1975. I taught on an LOA (Letter of Appointment) for the department the following fall and also started working in Getchell Library in January of 1976.

At the library I worked with Lou Amestoy in a department that no longer exists called Bib Search (Bibliographic Searching), and we were part of the book acquisition process. We double-checked to make sure that we didn't already have books that were being ordered and those kinds of things. It was a very mind-numbing, boring kind of work. But it was your big life lesson about jobs, you know? It's not the work; it's the people. So the people were nice and great, but the job was not. I kept saying to myself, "I did a master's degree, and now I am doing this?" Basque Studies was also in the library downstairs at that time.

Then I decided to try writing nonfiction articles full-time, so in spring of 1979 I left the library. You're young, and you want to do these things, and you don't realize that it takes two or three years to establish yourself before people start buying your work. I finally realized that I wanted to write fiction. I did not want to write essays the rest of my life, but fiction was not a way to earn a living. So I was unemployed and ran out of money and ended up working someplace else for about a year.



The Basque Studies Program's collection in the basement of Getchell Library, 1973.

Learning Basque, the dictionary, and becoming faculty

One day I got a call from Ruth Donovan, who at that time was the assistant director of the library under Harold Morehouse. She asked me if I would be interested in working in Basque Studies, which I thought was a wonderful thing for her to do. I felt like I led a charmed life at that moment, but I really needed a job. There was a position in Basque Studies, because Jill Berner had taken maternity leave and found out that she was having twins. So she had to take a year off, instead of three months, and they needed someone to fill in for her during that year. So I said yes.

Back then, Darlene Ammons was the assistant coordinator of the Basque Studies Program, and she was the person who interviewed me and hired me in 1981. Then at the end of the year, when Jill came back, I was half expecting that my job would end. But Bill Douglass called me into his office and said, "Would you like to stay on?"

I said, "Yes! If it's OK with Jill."

He said, "I already asked her, and she said it's OK." [laughter] So that's how I wound up staying in Basque Studies. There's a lot

of stuff behind the scenes there, because you don't just hire somebody in the state system. You have to acquire a position. You have to fight for an extra position and be granted the right to hire somebody by the university, and that's what he had done.

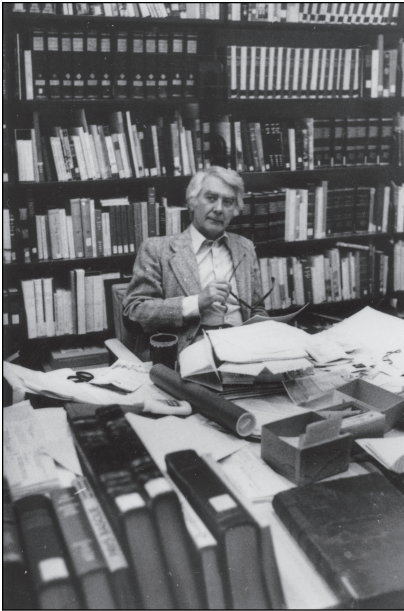
Jill and I were library assistants. We were at the library, but we were a totally separate entity, and people didn't have a clue about the Basque Studies Program. We just had rooms inside the building. We did all of the ordering of books and all the shipping to the building, but nobody downstairs opened the packages, because they didn't go through the acquisitions process yet. We would collect all the invoices, and then at one point the invoices were sent down to Acquisitions, so they could keep a record of what we had ordered and bought. We were our own little, bitty library, in and of ourselves. We, the program and the Basque collection, were all one entity.

Jon Bilbao was the bibliographer, which meant that he decided where the books would go on the shelves and did a do-it-yourself cataloging. It wasn't cataloging, but he did access numbers for the books, and then he put cards in, so people could find the books. Jill and I helped him do that. He would give us books and say, "Well, you do these numbers, and then I'll tell you if they're right." Or, "You type up these cards for me." We did filing cards, and we checked out books, and we knew the collection backwards and forwards, because we were reshelving books all the time.

Jon would leave the books on a table, and Gorka's great delight was to open those packages and see what the new books were. Jill and I would open packages, if Gorka hadn't already opened them all, because we were the ones who were putting the flags in the books, giving them numbers, and putting them on the shelves.

Then Jon Bilbao retired, and Bill Douglass did some negotiating with the dean of libraries to use some monies to provide a librarian for Basque Studies. I don't know the details because I wasn't part of that. We hired a librarian in the late 1980s. The librarian was a split position—half of that position belonged to the library, and half of it belonged to Basque Studies, which made it very difficult for the librarian.

In my opinion that was the beginning of the split between the library and the program, because once you have a position



"Jon Bilbao was the bibliographer, which meant that he decided where the books would go on the shelves and did a sort of do-it-yourself cataloging."

Jon Bilbao surrounded by the Basque collection, late 1980s.

split like that at a university, in order to be tenured, your alliance has to lie somewhere, and that position was going to be tenured through the library.

Jill and I did a lot of correspondence and a tremendous amount of typing, and there were no computers when I started. My God, I feel so old now! There were no computers! We did everything on those old IBM Selectric typewriters. Bill Douglass was busy with his research, and he was writing books, and he didn't type. It was almost a cultural thing, when men did not type their own things. He was a faculty member, and he had secretaries to do the typing.

Also, there was no e-mail, so all correspondence had to be typed up. The reason that

you had to have two people to handle all of that was because you didn't have computer files. You couldn't correct things on screen, so if you made a mistake, you had to go back and retype the whole page, especially for manuscripts. For letters it wasn't too bad, because if it was only one or two mistakes, you could try to use white-out, and you could retype over the white-out. But if you had more than that, then you had to retype the whole thing, because otherwise it looked tacky. It looked like you weren't doing a good job, like you had sloppy people working for you.

Then 1982 was the year that Osborne came out with the first portable computer, which had a little six-inch screen. I don't know how it came about, but Bill said Jan, his wife, bought the Osborne. Bill walked into the office with a box, and the box was bigger than the top of a desk. He said, "Jan and I are going on vacation. Here's your computer. Open it up and have it running

by the time I get back in a week." So Jill and I spent the whole next week setting up the computer and learning how to use it. That was the first computer in Basque Studies, and we were one of the first offices on campus to have a computer.

I believe that Gorka Aulestia was also in the program at that time. He had come to Reno in 1980, six months or a year before me. He and his wife, Mertxe, were in Pullman, Idaho, in 1980 when Mount St. Helens erupted. He was already working on the Basque-English, English-Basque dictionary. After my first three months working at Basque Studies I started private lessons in Basque with Gorka.

Gorka had me come up to the office at 7:30 in the morning, and between 7:30 and 8:00 we would do a Basque lesson. Gorka was a traditional language teacher. Within language teaching there is a methodology called "traditional method," which is *really* difficult sometimes, because you have the book and the exercises, and you read a question, and then you try to answer the question, and so on. But his heart was in the right place, and he would talk to me in Basque. Well, at the beginning there was very little I could say.

We structured our lessons around a very short story. Gorka found some books with very elementary Basque in them, and there would be one or two pages of Basque. My job was to read that little story and learn whatever I could about the grammar, and he would ask me questions about it. I would go home with the couple of pages in Basque, and I would spend four hours a night trying to figure out what all the words meant.

Every weekend I would spend between ten and fifteen hours trying to learn a verb form or drill myself on something I'd found, like the present tense auxiliary verb forms, for example. I would write my own drills, my own questions for the story, and I would write out the answers, and then I would tape record the questions and the answers as best I could, using my Spanish pronunciation.

For \$81 I bought this little hand-held computer from TI, Texas Instruments, or something out of *Popular Mechanics*, to create a computer drill. You could hook it up to your television, and it had a little finger keyboard. You'd have to type everything in line by line, and then you couldn't save anything. So I'd type in the exercise, the drill; it would run on my screen, and then I'd lose it, and I'd have to start over again the next week. It was very labor intensive. I spent a tremendous amount of my spare time,

between twenty and thirty hours a week, creating my own Basque lessons and then practicing them.

Then for the two and a half hours a week that I was with Gorka, I would say, "Here's what I've done this week. Here are the exercises I've come up with, what I've been practicing, and my questions, and I'm prepared to answer." So he would ask me the questions that I had prepared for myself, and then he would ask me some other things based on what was in those questions. It was quite an ordeal, and yet, of course, I loved learning languages, so it was one of the happiest times I can remember, because all my spare time was consumed with learning a foreign language. Life doesn't get any better than that. So I had a really good time learning Basque.

After a couple of years of learning, Gorka and I would speak Basque to each other all the time, even though I still wasn't very fluent. But we could communicate what we needed to communicate and do all of that in Basque.

I stayed a library assistant until my Basque reached a certain level, which took nearly two years. Then, in 1983 I started working with Gorka on the dictionary, which was extremely intensive and very detail-oriented work. Gorka would work on his own, building a corpus for four hours a day, and then we would work together in the afternoons for three or four hours. We would have all our dictionaries spread out around us, and we would come up with the definitions for the words, and very often they were words in Basque that I did not yet know. So the first thing Gorka would do was tell me what the word meant. Well, often Gorka told me what he *thought* the word meant, and that wasn't always what the word meant! [laughter]

Sometimes we would have to go into the Basque dictionary to find out what the word meant in Spanish, and then we would go to the Spanish dictionary, if I didn't recognize it there, and we would find out some synonyms for it in English. Then I would tell Gorka what each of the English synonyms for the Spanish word meant for the Basque word, so that he could say, "Yes, this one is appropriate. No, that one is not appropriate."

It was an extremely complex and intense kind of mental game for us. We often had to investigate in the French dictionaries, as well. It depended on where we found the word, because maybe the word was from a French-Basque province,



"So the first thing Gorka would do was tell me what the word meant. Well, often Gorka told me what he thought the word meant, and that wasn't always what the word meant!" Linda White and Gorka Aulestia working on the Basque-English Dictionary, mid-1980s.

and then obviously we aren't going to find that word in one of the dictionaries from the Spanish side.

Gorka used these big, clumsy, art-gum erasers, which crumbled on the paper, because they were the only thing that really worked on the pencil. So when we finished for the day, he would shout, "*Iepa!*" and bounce the art-gum eraser so hard against the table that it would flip up and hit the ceiling. That was how we ended our sessions every day.

There were few Basque-English word lists in existence, prior to our dictionary. For example, Joe Eiguren, from Boise, had put a list of words together from Bizkaian Basque with some English equivalents. It was a noble effort, and we actually looked through it, and there were times when it was handy for us. There were also a couple of other word lists that some people included in the back of their books. But, for all intents and purposes, we were the first comprehensive Basque-English, English-Basque

dictionary ever attempted, that actually addressed the problems that a dictionary should address, except for pronunciation in English. Gorka didn't think that was necessary.

I think Gorka saw the audience for the dictionary as mainly American students trying to learn Basque. Gorka put some advice about pronunciation in the beginning of the dictionary, but his feeling was that if they can pronounce Spanish, they can pronounce Basque. In other words, the vowels are the same, and there are some differences in the consonants and so on, but he felt that addressing them in the preface was sufficient. Later on, what we discovered was that many more dictionaries sold in the Basque country than sold in the United States, so the main audience for a dictionary was school children in the Basque Country.

They really would have benefited by having the English pronunciation guide, but it wasn't there. I tried to convince Gorka, but he got to make the decisions. I thought it would be worthwhile, but he felt we were in a race against Michael Morris's dictionary project. So he was very urgent about, "We have to finish, and that will slow us down." So we never did that.

I'm really proud of the work we did on the dictionary. But if I could go back and change anything about our dictionary, I would include the English pronunciation guide so that non-English speakers would have a clue about how to pronounce the English words. But I don't see any opportunity to make an edited version or a new edition. Five or six years after we finished our dictionary, Michael Morris came out with his dictionary, so now there is an English-Basque dictionary with the appropriate pronunciation guides.

After we worked on the dictionary for a while, Bill called me into his office and said, "We have to change your position," because the university had told him, "You have two people working on that project as equals. One of them is a professional, and one of them is a classified person."

I don't know exactly how it happened, but he gave me the choice of either remaining a classified person or having my contract changed to professional. I did the professional route, and it did change my status.

I went from library assistant to lexicographer, which was a faculty position. Can you believe they invented the title of

lexicographer for me? Gorka and I were the only lexicographers on campus.

I did not have my own office at the time. I was up front with Jill, and we had our little Osborne computer and two desks. Bill said, "If you're now a professional, you cannot sit up front, because people will expect you to type, and you're a professional, and you cannot type other people's things." This was in the Stone Age, and things were different.

I said, "That's fine." There was no office for me, so I wound up working for six months in a study carrel. [laughter] So, on the one hand, I was professional, and I wasn't expected to type other people's stuff, and I couldn't sit at the front desk; but on the other hand, I was demoted to a study carrel, because there wasn't anyplace to put me! Then, eventually, the office where Michelle Rachal is now became my office. [Rachal was the Basque



"Can you believe they invented the title of lexicographer for me? Gorka and I were the only lexicographers on campus." Linda White holding a copy of the *Basque-English Dictionary* at the Basque Library, 1990.

Library assistant from 2004 to 2007 and was replaced by Shannon Sisco in June of 2007.]

Once Gorka and I finished the dictionary, we had to change my title to assistant coordinator, and I became administrative faculty, which is not a tenure track position. I'm not comfortable talking about a lot of things that went on around that situation.

Tenure in the United States is a very strange thing, and administrative faculty positions are hired year to year and are often weighed down with paperwork. They run offices and have to be in charge of a lot of people or a lot of money in order to get ahead as an administrative faculty person. And who did I have? We're so tiny.

From 1989 to 1999 I was the assistant coordinator, so I started doing a lot of administrative support for Dr. Douglass. For example, I attended the College of Arts and Science department heads' meetings in his stead, while he was either out of town or doing other things. I did a lot of other administrative chores and paperwork. Dr. Douglass would pass on mail to me that needed answering, and then I would take care of some of that. I helped organize whatever conferences or functions we were doing. Especially during his last five years, I did more and more with regard to the administration of the program, because he was half-time and wanted to spend more time writing.

When Dr. Douglass retired, and Dr. Zulaika became director, he made one of his priorities to go to the dean of Arts and Science and lobby very, very strongly and actively for changing my position to an academic faculty position, and that got done within about six weeks. And boom, my position was changed to academic faculty in 2000, but my tenure status did not. So I'm still on a yearly contract. It's been that way all my life. So there's no point. I've been here too many years to worry about it. I've been here thirty years, and I don't have tenure.

Having my position changed to academic faculty was probably the biggest positive change in my career, because the rules governing administrative faculty and academic faculty are different. It was a big plus for me to become academic faculty. I felt finally that my education and my job title coincided, and I felt very much liberated to do the kinds of things that academic faculty positions do. It freed me psychologically to actually pursue my own research and to leave a great deal of that administrative work behind.

Of course, one of the things that really helped in that area was having Zulaika become the director of the center, because then almost all of my administrative work was his concern and not my concern. My position title no longer included assistant coordinator. There has not been an assistant coordinator since then, but Zulaika has support people, like Jill and Kate Camino. When I was assistant coordinator under Bill, Bill had me. I remember at one point Jill complained that she didn't have enough to do, and then I realized that I was taking on way too much. Now, Jill has all that on her shoulders, because Zulaika doesn't have an assistant coordinator. I'm just the graduate advisor for the PhD program.

I began an intensive period of research and writing, and a lot of my publications came out in 2000. That was the year I won the Mousel-Feltner Award for Excellence in Research and/or Creative Activity. The dean, Bob Mead, actually called me on the phone and said, "Linda, I want you to go up for the Mousel-Feltner, and I want you to tell Zulaika about it, because he's brand-new as director, and I'm not sure he knows about it. I'm telling you this, because you've got all these publications this year, and that doesn't happen every year to anybody, and you have a chance for the Mousel-Feltner. I want you to do that."

I said, "Wow! OK. Thanks!"

So I went to Zulaika and said, "I think we should put me up for the Mousel-Feltner."

Zulaika said, "OK." [laughter] And I got it, so I was very pleased. The award was a huge psychological boost for me, because I'd been just working with my head down for so many years, and people forgot to say, "Hey, you've done a good job!" Over the last years I've noticed that people get so busy at the center that they don't have a chance or the opportunity to say, "Wow, that was great!" So you just keep working and working and working with little or no reward, it feels like. You get your paycheck, but there's just not a lot of effort wasted on praise or those kinds of interpersonal rewards.

It was wonderful to win the Mousel-Feltner. I felt that my college had really acknowledged the work I was doing, and I felt like I was truly a member of the faculty of a college. So when I did my acceptance speech for the Mousel-Feltner, I thanked Zulaika for helping me earn the Mousel-Feltner. He was surprised



"The award was a huge psychological boost for me, because I'd been just working with my head down for so many years, and people forgot to say, 'Hey, you've done a good job!'" Bob Mead and Linda White hold a certificate commemorating Linda's Mousel-Feltner Award, May 2001.

that I thanked him, but if he had not become director, I would not have earned the Mousel-Feltner.

The 1980s: USAC, visiting students, a minor, and a PhD

The 1980s was a period of incredible growth. There was a lot of energy, but at the same time Basque Studies was very small. Then the energy was different. Now the energy seems to be outward. At the time there was a wonderful atmosphere of team experience.

In 1982 Carmelo Urza came onboard as a faculty member and to run our summer abroad program. The original plan was

to do a summer program in Europe every three years, but it was a huge amount of work.

Carmelo did his master's degree in Spanish with me at UNR, and we shared the same graduate office in Frandsen Humanities. Then he got married and went to do his PhD right away. After he finished his PhD, he got a teaching job in Virginia. When Jon Bilbao left, we had a faculty position open up, and Carmelo got the job.

Carmelo grew that program so large that within a couple of years it became a year-round Basque Studies Program abroad, and he just kept growing it. That was phenomenal. Pretty soon he had to have his own office and spun off of the Basque Studies Program. Now, he's still tenured through our department and runs USAC as a separate entity administratively.

Bill Douglass was writing books like crazy. He was still in the heart of his research, and so there was a lot of excitement there. It was really exciting for me, too, because I was learning Basque. When I got to a point where my Basque became proficient, I also started teaching the Basque class that Gorka used to teach before he went back to the Basque Country.

At the time we had a *convenio* [an agreement] with the Basque government to send young Basque scholars to Reno for a year. When the agreement was signed there were five people with cameras, clicking away! It seems really small in retrospect, but back then it seemed like a big deal to us. It was a lot of fanfare. For many years we had a wall hanging of the *convenio* we signed in the reading room.

We thought they would send young people who were still working on their degree, but they sent people who already had their *licenciatura* [bachelor's degree], and the Basque government told them they were going to be teaching Basque. Well, I was teaching Basque, so we had some conflict of interest and some misunderstandings, but we turned them into a team. I ended up training them how to teach within the American system. It was a fun, exciting time, because we would have three or four young people from the Basque Country around at any given time. We also had other people who would come, like on USAC scholarships, and a lot of them were young.

We had an atmosphere during that time where everybody spoke Basque in the program. It was just very energizing, exciting, and upbeat, and it was a really wonderful time. I really enjoyed

that. For instance, Javi Cillerros came as one of the students sponsored by the Basque government, and he wound up staying ten years. So things like that were happening then. We were attracting people, and they would come for a year, and then they would find a way to stay. So we ended up with this growing body of young Basque people who came to do one thing or another. And then the next year more people would come on the Basque government's *convenio*, to teach or help with the Basque classes.

Basque Studies was very much a small research program with a library collection. We were not an academic department. However, during that time the minor in Basque studies was established, because we had enough professors to occasionally offer classes for a minor. Since then, probably ten or twelve students have graduated with a minor in Basque, because there might be one every year or two. Almost every single student has been Basque American, but it's not like people flock to us and



"We were attracting people, and they would come for a year, and then they would find a way to stay. So we ended up with this growing body of young people." Visiting students, scholars, and Basque Studies faculty, Basque Studies Library, c. 1990. Front row, left to right: Nere Lete and Linda White. Second row: Ángel Ansa, Lisa Corcostegui, Itxaso Sánchez, Mila Álvarez, Josu Rekalde, and Eneida Andueza. Back row: Bill Douglass.

say, "I want to do a Basque minor!" They wanted to study Basque because their family was Basque.

When the minor began, it was two years of Basque language, plus three additional classes. Around 2004, we changed it so that it was the first year of Basque language, and then you could use the second year as one of your additional classes, but it didn't have to be a language class, and it is up to twenty-one credits. So there's more flexibility for people now to do the minor. The minor made good sense for us, because if people were taking our language class, that was a big chunk of the minor, and all they had to do was take a couple other Basque-related courses. So, we didn't have to offer a whole lot of classes. The minor was a way to reward those people who were interested in our classes.

Within the university, if you're going to be a teaching department, and if you're going to offer a major, you have to be an academic department. You have to have enough faculty members to provide enough classes on a consistent basis to allow students to take those classes and finish their major. We never had that kind of critical mass. We're still not big enough to do that. The Women's Studies Program teaches, but they don't do any of the other stuff we do, either, and they constantly have to hire people part-time to help with those classes.

There was no PhD available in Basque studies at the time, even in the Basque Country, so there really was a need for it. It just seemed like the next natural step. I was an underling at the time, so I was not in on how the PhD program was established. I kind of viewed that from afar, and I wasn't privy to the conversations or anything. I just remember that Bill came in one day and said, "OK. It's a done deal. We're going to do a tutorial PhD in Basque studies—a very special kind of PhD."

Bill came up with the idea of five participating outside departments, which would have, to a certain extent, a lot of say in what the student has to do. However, we try to keep most of that control. For example, the Anthropology Department has the student do a degree in anthropology, so they might as well be getting their PhD in anthropology, you know. Anthropology is very active in what they want students to do, and they get a lot of input on required classes.

Students who want to do a PhD in history also get input from History, because the History Department has a PhD program,

and they have their own ideas about what a student should do if they're affiliated with them. Joxe Mallea was an early student in that program. Political Science is also a participating department, and so is Geography. Geography came in when Pauliina Raento wanted to do her degree in that field. So each one of those PhD's is different.

When I had a student who was interested in Basque, it was easy for me, because the Department of Foreign Languages has no PhD. So even though the department is involved with students doing a PhD in Basque literature, they have been much more laid back about letting me and the student construct a program. We've had a lot of freedom in designing the program. That's a blessing.

So I can sit down with a PhD student in literature, and I can say, "This is what you want to do for your dissertation. You're going to cover certain things. You need to have some kind of background in Basque lit. If you only speak Spanish, then you're going to read historiographies and translations, but you need to know something about Basque culture to be able to tie that in." So students who do a PhD in Basque literature get to plunge in right away and concentrate on Basque literature, culture, and language.

We have offered enough courses in culture and history to give people a nice foundation in Basque culture. We also have the requirement that before you get your PhD, you have to show some kind of proficiency in the Basque language. For most people it's taking two years of Basque language and then passing a proficiency exam, which consists of reading simple newspaper articles and translating them. So you show that you can use a dictionary and you can find out something in the Basque language for your research.

We had a couple of people who signed up for the Basque Studies PhD program who didn't get very far. We had someone who wanted to do linguistics but had a decided problem with gambling. He didn't know he did, I'm sure, until he came to Reno. But you can't come to Reno and make that discovery and then have any hope of success. One unfortunate fellow died in a hit-and-run accident. The first PhD students to graduate from that program were Gorka, Joxe, and I.

Basque Studies organizations

The Anglo-American Basque Studies Society only lasted about three years, and it was an in-house effort by Darlene Ammons to organize a scholarly discussion group. She took possible members from the mailing list for our newsletter. She knew some of the people who were scholars and so on, and she thought it would be a great idea to have this organization that could have a discussion group about Basque culture.¹

She did this a little ahead of her time. This was before the Internet. Now, we do this on the Internet without thinking. This is what Yahoo! Groups was like before the Internet. If we were doing this today, we would set up a group on Yahoo! Groups, like we did for Ikasi 2005, and the next thing you know, we would have a discussion group. Well, we didn't have the Internet back then.

However, the association didn't work well because you had to print a newsletter and solicit membership to pay for the mailings and all of that. If you can go to Yahoo! Groups, and everybody gets in for free, it's no big deal. But it faltered quite early on, actually, because some people did subscribe, but then for the monies you got, it barely covered the postage and the printing of the newsletter, and then you had to create a newsletter. So that's not a discussion group. That's one person or some people in our office doing a tremendous amount of work, trying to get a second newsletter done on a more than annual basis. It just became a huge headache for Darlene. I may be speaking out of turn—maybe she loved it. She's gone, God rest her soul. But just in my observation, it seemed like a *huge* struggle to get something going, and it eventually petered out. People stopped subscribing, and we quit publishing.

But not all Yahoo! Groups discussion lists are successful, either. I started an online discussion mailing list for the Consortium for the Study of Basque Women, and it was *dead*. It just sat there. About once every six months some brand-new member would find us and think we were going to answer all their research questions. Maybe somebody would answer them, but likely as not, no one did. That was the early days for those things as well, and it was not on Yahoo! Groups. So,

obviously, there's a need for Yahoo! Groups, so hooray for them. [laughter]

At one point, I decided to translate a novel by a Basque woman, which turned to be *Nerea eta Biok* by Laura Mintegi. Basque men are the first ones people think about translating, and unless you make an effort, you're not going to get the work of women into English. I thought it was worth being read in English. So Laura gave me permission to translate her novel, and then the poor thing had to wait six years to see it published. [It was finally published in 2005 under the title of *Nerea and I*.]

So the consortium started off that way. Dr. Jeronima "Jeri" Echeverria—now the Provost at California State University, Fresno—came to town, and we went for coffee, and I told her that I wanted to publish Laura's book, and she said, "Maybe what we need is a group, so like people can talk to each other and all that." It sounded like another Anglo-American Basque Studies Society. So anyway, she wanted to do a group. Then Dr. Teresa del Valle from the University of the Basque Country decided that she also wanted to be a part of that. I'm not a big group person, and I don't want to start societies. I don't want to conquer the world, so I was not interested in organizing group activities. The Ikasi program is the closest I get.

Dr. Echeverria and Dr. del Valle felt that the optimum place for the group to happen would be the Basque Studies Program, because it made the most sense to have it centered here. [The consortium was established in February of 1997, and it was terminated in 2003.] So the three of us were supposed to organize and run this group, and each of us with our own agenda. There was an intention of doing some kind of gender studies, but I was the one doing it. Other people weren't coming here to do their gender studies. My agenda was to publish Laura Mintegi's novel. I thought, "Well, OK. This can be our publishing agenda, getting this book done."

Then they thought, "It'd also be really a great idea if we could set up a list server, so people could talk to each other." Well, it was the early days for list servers, and it never worked right. Then we revamped the Basque Studies Web site, and they wanted information about the Consortium for the Study of Basque Women on it. So we created some information for the Web site. And frankly, I'm kind of complaining here, but there was a lot of pressure on me to organize some event or do something with a

group that was not my idea in the first place. "Do that! Do that! Do that!" But nobody said, "And let me help you." [laughter] I just wanted to get the book done.

I love working with Jeri Echeverria and with Teresa del Valle, but things happened in their lives that kept them away from the consortium. Neither of them had the time to be involved. Dr. Echeverria was promoted into administration at her university, and Dr. del Valle was in Europe doing what she had to do over there.

So finally I decided that I couldn't do this by myself, because that's not what I'm comfortable doing. It was one too many things to have piled on top of an already very busy schedule. I had my whole publishing agenda; I had to teach, and on top of that I was supposed to run the consortium. So I was involved in doing a lot of things, and that was the last one that got attention, because it was not high on my priority list, and there wasn't a lot of activity for it. I didn't even know what I was doing with this organization. I didn't really have a feel for what the purpose of the organization was, aside from a chat group. That part of the consortium was someone else's spark.

Then Carmelo mentioned to me that maybe it shouldn't be called a consortium, because that implied that there were a lot of universities involved, and because his USAC was also called a consortium. So I said, "Well, that's fine. Then let's just take it off the Web site and call it defunct and shut down the list," and that's what we did. Because what was I supposed to do? Change the name on something that was not going anywhere and that I really was not inspired to do anything with alone?

We also decided to terminate the consortium, because we wanted to take our gender issues in a different direction. We like to pretend that we've pretty much fought that battle. Well, we all know that battle hasn't been *won*, but we wanted to turn our energies in a different direction.

A literary fieldwork dissertation and women in translation

In 1993, Bill and I had a conversation about my future, and he said, "You're doing all the work as if you had a PhD, so why don't you get one?" So I agreed to do a PhD. We had to ask special permission from the president of the university, who at that time was Joe Crowley, and then we had to go through proper

channels so that we could get that special permission to work half-time while I did my PhD on campus. We were granted those permissions because the Basque studies PhD was not available anywhere else as late as 1993, and so in order to do my degree in that field, I had to do it here.

I was allowed to work half-time from 1993 to 1995, and I defended my dissertation in April of 1996. By then I started to work full-time. It was really hard, because I worked more than half-time while I was doing the PhD, but it was impossible not to, because it all blended together.

I'm really glad I did the PhD, because the personal fulfillment was wonderful, but also, in subtle ways it changed other people's perspective on me. After finishing my degree I felt a difference, very much so. I was treated differently, more like faculty and less like administrative support. But I don't think anybody purposely meant to treat me less like faculty before.

My PhD was in Basque literature. Actually, it's interesting, because I have always considered myself, and still consider myself, a teacher of foreign languages, first and foremost, but we didn't offer a PhD in language teaching or in linguistics, because the university didn't have a linguistics department. The English Department is now beginning to add more linguistics classes and that sort of thing. At the time, it also made more sense to do Basque literature, because my undergraduate and my master's degrees were all in literature, not in linguistics, and also because, academically, that covered more area for us at the program.

It took me twelve years to learn to read Basque, so I couldn't have done my degree sooner, but I had to acquire enough language skill to actually read the language. Usually, you can read a language within a year with a dictionary, but Basque is completely opposite. You can start speaking Basque within a year, but it takes forever to learn to read.

When you do a PhD in literature, you assume that you're going to do a library PhD, where you pick a work, and you read it, and you read all the criticism, and then you contribute to the body of criticism. I was a PhD student at the Basque Studies Program, and nobody did that here. I may have done one of the few fieldwork literary dissertations in the history of the country. Basque Studies has always been very much anthropology oriented. Also, the chairman of my committee was Bill Douglass,

and that's why I did fieldwork. I don't regret that, but it was just a very unusual way to do a literature dissertation.

I did my PhD on Basque women writers. So I wound up going to the Basque Country and living in San Sebastián for four and a half months and doing fieldwork interviews with Basque female writers and meeting a couple of critics and that sort of thing. I recorded those interviews in Basque in preparation for writing my dissertation, and it was wonderful also for my language level. It really came together for me when I was in the Basque Country. That was an excellent experience, but it was like being in limbo for four and a half months.

(I had Cameron Watson, a graduate student from the program, living in my house while I was gone, and that worked out really well for me. I didn't have to worry about my house or my pets. I hope it worked out well for him.)

In San Sebastián I lived with a woman, who was a widow, near the university, but she was never home. So it was as if I had this tiny, little apartment to myself. I wanted to write while I was there, but I could *not* write, and I could not force myself to do any kind of brainwork in that little, tiny apartment. I had to go to the university library and do all my reading and writing there. So I spent all my time outdoors. It's like everything was happening on La Concha, on that beautiful beach in San Sebastián. I did a lot of talking to people and that kind of cultural assimilation by being outdoors.

I remember one week I tried to set up appointments with people, and it was such a nightmare for me, because nobody on the Spanish side of the Basque Country talked on the phone. I was able to talk to Basque author Itxaso Borda two or three times on the telephone because she was in France. I would start calling people, in San Sebastián even, about five or six in the afternoon until ten or eleven o'clock at night, and nobody answered the phone—nobody. [laughter] I couldn't use the phone in the apartment, so I had to go out and use a pay phone. I used up my phone card with no answers. It just rang and rang and rang.

Finally, after a whole week of this I began to feel desperate, because I needed to set up these appointments for my work, and I could not reach people. I was in total frustration. I just threw everything down. I finally gave up, and I said, "That's it! I'm not touching the damn phone again. I am taking the weekend off."

I put on my walking shoes, and I just strolled along La Concha, along the promenade, and I got halfway around, and I ran into one of the people that I had been trying to call. They were out walking next to the beach. So I set up my appointment. Then I kept walking, and I ran into a second person I had been trying to call. [laughter] So I set up that appointment. I kept walking, and by the time I got to the old part of the city, I had run into three people that I had been trying to call, and I said, "Well, that's it. I'm never making another phone call in the Basque Country again. It is *not* worth the effort. I'm just going to go out and walk around."

It was so amazing. That was a huge cultural difference for me, because everything in the States is done and arranged on the phone. But once I started walking around town, it worked out OK. If you go out walking in the evening, you're going to meet everybody you need to meet. They're all out there doing the same thing. It eliminated a huge burden of guilt for me, because I was feeling so guilty that I was not sitting in that little apartment trying to write.

When the lady came home from her job—about ten o'clock at night—she would turn the TV up really loud, and it was a little, tiny apartment. I would be in my room, and I could hear this television blaring in the other room, and I couldn't concentrate, so I couldn't do any work at night. Plus, she wanted me to join her and watch TV. She understood Basque, but she wouldn't speak it. So the only person that I lived with did not want to speak Basque. I had to do all of my practicing with Basque outside.

If I were to go back and do it again, I would sign up for Basque classes. But it was very difficult to try and do that while trying to do interviews with people, because you had to be ready to go when they needed you, and it took a tremendous amount of time to get them to trust you enough to actually set up an interview and talk to you. So it wasn't a matter of just saying, "Can I talk to you on such-and-such a date?" You had to meet the person, and then you had to socialize with the person, and then you had to socialize more. Then you had to hopefully establish a rapport, because you only got interviews from the people who felt they had a rapport. Then after two or three months, you finally got the interview.

So all of the interviews actually took place during the last month of my trip, because I had to do all of this personal interaction buildup ahead of time, which I didn't regret and I didn't mind doing. And it was very different from that American feeling of, "Go, have your agenda, make your appointments, ask your questions, and get out." There was none of that. So it was a total cultural immersion and cultural experience.

When I came back to Reno, I tried to work all this fieldwork into my dissertation, and my dissertation really became a historiography. The more women I talked to, the more I realized that a lot of women were writing, but none of the literary critics talked about them. For instance, Basque critic Jon Kortazar mentioned the name of one female in one of his books, which was published in 1980. As I read through these histories of Basque literature, it seemed to me that there were no women. I thought, "Where are the women?" I know they're writing, because I'm a woman, and I write, and women like to write. As reported in newspapers of the past I knew that women were winners of writing contests, but once they reached a certain level, it seemed that they stopped writing. I said, "Well, that doesn't make sense."

What was actually happening was that they continued to write, but they were ignored by the publishing industry and by the critics in the Basque Country. The number of women who didn't get published was probably astronomical. So a lot of what they did was lost, because nobody seemed to read it, and nobody talked about it. Once I realized what was going on, then it became a detective story, and I did a lot investigative research to locate women's names.

I would find four mentions of women in a book, and then I would start looking them up and reading about them. Then I would find that they had friends and that they worked with somebody, and then I would look those people up. If you went to a bookstore like Bilintx, since there were no female names on the backs of the books, you had to actually open the book and hope you got a clue. So I spent a lot of time in bookstores, pulling books off a shelf and trying to find out who that author was. Little by little I started building this body of writers who happened to be female.

In the Basque and Spanish societies, there was a convention about not using the first names of the authors. This was also

another cultural block to discovering who these women were. So you would read an article about five or six or ten different authors, and they would not give first names. They would use the last names, and then if they gave you anything, they would give you the first initials, so you had no idea if they were male or female. And if you think about it, when a field is dominated by one gender, you automatically assume all the references you find belong to that gender. So you might have an article that talked about ten male writers and two female writers, but they were all treated with the initials, and everyone, including myself, assumed they were all men. So they would just block out the possibility that any of them could be women.

We do this in American culture, also, with doctors and nurses. People automatically ask, "Who was your doctor, and what did *he* say? Who was your nurse? Was *she* nice to you?" But we're learning how to change that, because there's a big crossover now—a lot of women becoming doctors, a lot of men become nurses—so we have to be aware of that in American society.

I discovered that as of 1996, 18 percent of published Basque authors were female. Almost a fifth of all Basque writers from 1545 to the present were female. I'm sure that the number is greater now, but I don't have statistics to back up my feeling. I believe that more and more women are writing, and whether or not they are being talked about in the Basque Country, it's happening more often. Because now there are some critics like Mari José "Marijo" Olaziregi, who happens to be a literary critic among other things, and she talks about the women more often. [Since June 2007, Olaziregi has been an assistant professor at the Center for Basque Studies, filling Linda's position after she retired.] Although Marijo did her dissertation on Bernardo Atxaga's readers and readership, she also turns her attention to women writers. And because she's highly respected in the Basque Country, the male critics are more likely to also address those issues. So that's been a really positive change.

I've been doing quite a bit of research since my dissertation. I'm really proud of the translations that I've done. Actually, I started doing translations in the early 1990s. *A View from the Witch's Cave* by José Miguel de Barandiaran, Teresa del Valle's *Korrika: Basque Ritual for Ethnic Identity*, and Gorka Aulestia's

Improvisational Poetry from the Basque Country were some of my early translations.

I also translated Mariasun Landa's children's books, *Txan Fantasma* and *Errusika*, but they didn't turn into the big sellers we were hoping they would be. There were things that had nothing to do with the translation or the quality of the books and had everything to do with stuff happening inside Nevada Press. I'm not qualified to talk about that, because I don't really know what was going on, but there seemed to be a distribution problem.

I'm proud of those associations with the Basque writers that I've forged over the years. Unfortunately, when you work at a university, you wind up doing so many things as part of your job that the things you're most proud of are sometimes the things that you get to spend the least time on. At least, it feels that way.

I really enjoy translation more than I enjoy supervising translators, let me put it that way. [laughter] So I'd rather do the work hands-on than be the director of the Basque Studies Literature and Translation Series, as it were. I'd rather get in the trenches and actually do the translations. I thought about our Literature and Translation Series in American terms, where you're lucky if you can publish one book a year. Marijo Olaziregi, coeditor of the series, thought about it in Basque terms, which is, "Quick! Let's work as fast as we can and get as many of these published as possible within the timeframe, before the money runs out." So between her mind train and my mind train, we're kind of striking a balance. So far we have published *An Anthology of Basque Short Stories*, *And the Serpent Said to the Woman*, and *Rosetti's Obsession*, and we've got the fourth, fifth, and sixth ones lined up.

Every project that I wanted to get done, I've managed to do it, including the translation of Laura Mintegi's novel, *Nerea eta Biok*, and the introduction. The translation of the *Fueros* that I spent many years doing was also published in 2005 as *The Old Law of Bizkaia*. Bill Douglass did the translation of Gregorio "Goio" Monreal's introduction to that book.

Goio wanted to do a book about the old law of Bizkaia, and he talked to Bill, who was head of the Basque Book Series at the time, and they talked to Nevada Press, and they thought it would be a good book. But they needed the *Fueros* translated into

English so that when Goio's part of the book was ready, the *Fueros* would also be available in English. When that project started in the early 1980s, they came to me and said, "Would you be interested in translating the *Fueros* from Old Spanish?"

And I said, "Wow! It's a legal document and in fifteenth-century Old Spanish. Sure. I'll give it a try." I really enjoy translations, and it was a way for me to do something creative on my job. At the time, I was still doing a lot of library assistant work.

The manuscript is the first written collection of the old laws of Bizkaia. Prior to the moment in time when scribes attended the meeting under the tree of Gernika² and wrote down what was being said, all of those meetings were done orally, and there was no written record of those old laws. So it was meaningful, because it was the first time anyone had written those laws down. It was also entertaining, because the very first paragraphs of that set of old laws included the names of all the representatives from the Basque Country who were present at the meeting. So you have this long list of Basque names being represented in Old Spanish by various spellings and all kinds of fun stuff. You felt like you were a part of history. You're standing there basically eavesdropping on this meeting.

It was also difficult, because in situations of that sort the people who attended the meetings knew what was going on, and they used shorthand. They talked about things that they didn't have to stop and explain, because everybody there understood what they were talking about, except the translator who had no *clue* what they were talking about. [laughter]

At the beginning, I couldn't coherently read the entire original manuscript for pleasure. So it became intensive research from the very first paragraph, because there were forms of Old Spanish that I was not familiar with. I had to look up old verb forms, like *tuviese*, which were never spelled the same way twice, and convoluted syntax.

I just plunged in and started translating. I didn't know that much about the laws of fifteenth-century Europe and much less about Spain, so there were times when I could not translate certain terms and the names of certain positions, like *correguidor*. How do you say that in English? There's no modern English word that means *correguidor*, because *correguidor* itself is a definition of a job that no longer exists. So I actually left some of those

words in Spanish, and they were explained in footnotes. I was halfway through the project before I realized that, "Oh, this word that they keep using over and over, what they really mean is this," and things just kind of coalesced for me.

I worked and worked and worked for a couple years on the book, because people kept saying, "Keep working, because Goio is writing the introduction. So you want the translation ready by the time Goio's introduction is ready."

By the time I got through it and went back and started reading my own translation next to the original, I was going, "Oh, that's hysterical! Look what I did here. OK, let's change that." After I finished the whole project, I could understand the real meaning of different words. Things started to make sense, because I knew where I was going. There were some words in the beginning that may not have made sense to me, and then by the time I finished reading the book, the book itself had explained what those words meant.

So finally I finished the translation, and I said, "Wow! I did it." It was a real challenge, and I'm actually very proud of that effort. I really enjoyed the mental aspect of translating it. I think my English translation might be the only one. I could be wrong, but I looked for them at the time. I wanted to know how other people dealt with certain words, and I did not have any luck. I found some modern English translations of Old English collections of laws, but that didn't help me, because England and Spain had two different legal systems.

The things, I think, that we can learn the most about are probably embedded deeply in the *Fueros*. You need to read it carefully, because a lot of the old laws had to do with property and possessions and that sort of thing and about how to deal with a certain situation if something happens, so that the local authorities could make decisions based on the evidence brought before them. You also have to really look for the parts that dealt with the Basque Country as a whole, such as military service and divorce laws or the lack thereof. There didn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to the order of the laws. Whatever came up became the next article in the *Fueros*.

Of course, the laws covered a wide variety of topics, and they were really interesting and fun to read and gave you a real view of society at the time. There are laws on how to handle situations where your neighbor accidentally cuts down a tree on your

property or apples fall from your tree onto your neighbor's property. Whose apples are they? There are also laws about women and who can marry and who can't. If a woman is a widow and she has three children, and if she wants to remarry, do those children remain her husband's children, or do they become the new husband's? Or if a woman brings property to a marriage, does it belong to the husband or to the children?

The people at Nevada Press called me one day and said, "Hi. We hear that Monreal's book is almost ready to go."

I said, "I guess you could say that, although Monreal has not written his part of the book yet. However, Linda White's translation is ready to go." [laughter] You grow up as a woman on this planet, and you just get used to these kinds of things. But in all the years that I've worked on the project, it has always been Goio Monreal's book, although he didn't write his part of the book until 2005, and I did the translation ten years before. Well, I think that he'd been working on it in between doing other things. It just takes time. So it's a little sexist frustration there.

Then Bill asked me if they could publish my translation as part of the Center for Basque Studies Classic Series, not as part of the Basque Book Series. I said, "Sure, I'd love to have you publish it, because I did that translation ten, twelve, or fifteen years ago." But I explained to him that I was involved in so many other things and trying to publish another book, that I couldn't re-involve myself in the translation. I was more than willing to give it to them, but someone who was knowledgeable about the legal system of medieval Spain would have to look at that manuscript. I said, "I can't reeducate myself and take a degree in medieval law, so I can review my own translation." Bill took the translation, and it was published.

There's only one of my pet projects that I've always wanted to do that I have not completed in my career yet, and I may run out of time. It is a verb dictionary, a list of conjugated auxiliary verbs in Basque with possible translations into English, so that people could read Basque text sooner. But that's the project I have not had time to work on.

The thing that slows you down when you're learning to read Basque is all of the verb tenses that you have not had time to learn in a classroom setting. There are over 3,000 auxiliary verbs. If you're lucky, you have time in a couple of years to learn only

the present and past-tense verb forms. You might get an inkling that there are conditionals and subjunctives and all those, but you never really get a chance to learn them.

In spoken Basque you can practically get by completely with just present and past-tense auxiliary verbs. You almost don't need anything else to be understood in your daily interactions. But as soon as you open a book or a newspaper, suddenly everybody is writing with these esoteric verb forms that you never hear spoken, and it really slows you down. You don't know where to find those verb forms; you don't know who the subject is. It's just very frustrating.

In my list you could look up any of the auxiliary verbs, so you would know what the subject of the sentence was and what tense you were reading. Then you wouldn't have to learn all those verbs before you could actually read a text in Basque, and I thought that it would be very useful.

I was lucky enough to be awarded a sabbatical leave in 2004, which allowed me to put all of my teaching materials together from the last twenty-five years of teaching and create a Basque language textbook for English speakers. Teaching Basque has been really pleasant, and I have loved teaching it. I tentatively entitled the manuscript *Aurrera*, and it will be published by Nevada Press in February 2008.

Basque Studies nowadays: a supernova

The program has developed in many different ways over the years, and it's been quite remarkable. We've added two new faculty positions, and that has been a *tremendous* help in the growth of the center, because as a research center, our productivity relies mainly on the research and the publications we produce. So we were very fortunate when the Nevada State Legislature allotted us those two new positions after the death of Pete Echeverria. It was not literally done in his memory, but you couldn't help but feel that it was an important way to pay homage to his memory.

We felt very privileged and grateful that they saw fit to expand the center by providing us with two additional research positions. That grew us to five faculty members, which is amazing when you think about it. Actually, that grew us to six, because Carmelo Urza is tenured through our center. So we're really five faculty

physically at the center, and Carmelo is at USAC, but he is a part of us.

Then, Dr. Zulaika has done amazing things when it comes to fundraising and was highly instrumental in helping to create the center's advisory board, which is heavily involved in fundraising for us. It's just outstanding the kind of progress we've made in that area.

The individual faculty members and their various productions and publications have gone a long way to changing the focus of the center and to really increasing the amount of work that the center can produce. The outreach factor has also changed, because everybody has their own special areas, and they contribute in their own way. As a literature person, I probably work closer to the vest. In other words, I do my own work, and I don't have other people involved in it per se.

Other faculty members have brought their own strengths to it. Dr. Totoricagüena knows people all over the world, throughout the diaspora, whereas Bill Douglass's field was immigration. It's as if Dr. Totoricagüena fills the slot that was empty after Dr. Douglass retired. So that connection to all the Basques outside



Center for Basque Studies and USAC faculty and staff pose with Linda White, April 2006. Left to right: Carmelo Urza, Sandra Ott, Kate Camino, Linda White, Jill Berner, Gloria Totoricagüena, and Bill Douglass.

the Basque Country has not been lost, because now we have Gloria, who works in that area.

We used to have this little, comfortable sun that rolled along, shining where it could. In the past we shined because we did a newsletter, and that was our outreach to the Basque-American community. Or we shined because we started a book series with the University of Nevada Press, and it has gone really well.

Then we reached this critical mass after the addition of our new faculty, and all of a sudden we became this supernova, this active, exploding, stellar mass that's shooting off in all directions at once. And it can sometimes be uncomfortable, because there's so much going on and there are many demands. It seems like those pictures of a supernova exploding. So we're not the central little sun anymore that just shines here and there.

We did a conference or two in the past, but now there's this push to try and do one every year or every other year. That's a lot of work for the whole center, but it may not specifically impact every faculty member. Even though everybody has their own interests when the conference arrives, everybody is expected to be there. So whenever there is something like that going on, everyone is drawn in by the sheer gravitational force of this event. This happens quite often and much more often than it ever used to.

Then we don't always communicate as well as we could as a group, because there's so much activity. People are so busy trying to keep their own work together or trying to maintain their own sanity that they don't always say, "Oh, by the way, we're doing this, this, and this." So sometimes these things kind of hit you upside the head. You don't have a clue what's coming.

So you can walk into the office thinking, "Thank God, at last I have a day when I can sit down and I can work on my verb dictionary," or whatever else you are working on, and you find out, "Oh, we have foreign visitors today, and everybody has to go to the meeting." Or, "Some of our researchers want to give a talk, and they're leaving Wednesday, so they're giving the talk today, and we need you downstairs. We need bodies in the seats."

You would think that a research center is this quiet, closed, little place where you do your own thing and you send out a newsletter. Those days are gone, gone, gone! Nowadays it is just all-encompassing, outward moving, and fast paced, and there is action on several fronts at once. I think that's a really healthy

thing for the university and for the center, but it's not always a fun thing to experience for the people who are actually living through it. However, I think overall the positive aspects of the growth and the change really outweigh the negative aspects. But change is never comfortable, and it's not always easy. So it's kind of a tradeoff. It's been quite a ride.

It takes a tremendous amount of work to reach out to the overall university, and it takes someone to coordinate it consistently and be in contact with university publications and venues for self-promotion. There are a lot of people on this campus who don't even know we're here, and they haven't got a clue what we do. So here we are, knocking our heads against walls, and bing, bang, bing, bang, like a ping-pong ball, trying to get everything done, and people see us from the outside and have *no* idea how active we are. We don't have the personnel or the time to carry out our own self-promotion and make ourselves as visible as we need to be in order to change that perception.

We, frankly, are too busy trying to do everything on the director's agenda and all these other things that we're involved in. We don't even have enough people to be doing as much as we're doing. We used to laugh about being *cuatro gatos* [four cats] in the dark trying to run a program. Now, we've got more faculty members, but we have also increased exponentially the amount of work that we want to accomplish and the number of projects that we are involved in. So we still often feel like we're just four cats in the dark.

We're just mushrooming and growing. At the end of every year, you try to stop and say, "Wow, look what we've accomplished!" But sometimes—and maybe this is a factor of my age, too—it feels like your head is spinning so fast that you don't even have time to stop and see what you've accomplished.

Within the university you always have that "publish or perish" thing. You're always competing, not against just *yourself*, which can be gratifying when you do more than you think you could have done, but also against every other faculty member on campus, for the obvious rewards, such as merit increases.

Then, of course, the center has always prided itself on hiring excellent people, and when you hire excellent people, they tend to be very self-motivated, and they tend to really push their production all the time. They tend to never slow down. Well, if you get a critical mass of people like that in one arena, it can get

pretty insane. You feel like you're on a merry-go-round that never stops! And nothing you did last year is going to help you two years from now. What you did last year was great, and that helped you this year, but now you're working this year to try and help yourself next year. Everybody wants to raise the bar higher than last year. The ideal is to do better this year than last year, and the center is really good at doing that.

After a while you say, "Where are we going to go now?" You keep raising the bar every year, and pretty soon you start to feel like if you don't do better than last year, then you fail. The bar has been raised so many times that you're producing at an outstanding level, but because you didn't do more than last year, then you feel like you didn't do well enough. So you can never do well enough. The bar keeps being raised and raised and raised and raised. It makes me chuckle. I think that's why people retire eventually, because they can no longer imagine jumping the bar. You can't jump it anymore. It's just, "Oh, my goodness!"



"I think that's why people retire eventually, because they can no longer imagine jumping the bar." Linda White accepts a commemorative plaque for her service to the Center for Basque Studies during her retirement ceremony, April 2006.

We had one year recently where the center published twenty or twenty-four books, something like that. I can't even remember, but it was such an outlandish number. Now, every year that we come in under twenty-four books, we're going to feel like we didn't do as well. That's insane, you know? [laughter] I don't even know if the University of Nevada Press publishes twenty-four books in a year! I mean, there's not another department on campus that does that. It's just incredible.

I think the raising-the-bar analogy is actually true for individuals as well as the center. Dr. Zulaika has specific goals in mind, and he has encouraged raising that bar beyond where other people might be comfortable. But everybody's personality is different. For instance, I prefer to work at a somewhat slower pace but feel sane. That's just me, and I'm getting older. But in my own way I raise my own bar. I mean, I have certain projects that I want to get done, and I do whatever I have to do to get them published, and that contributes to the big picture as well. That's true with every individual in Basque Studies, because you have an office full of incredible, super overachievers, who are constantly saying, "Yes! I can do that!" That's the only way Zulaika could actually have the center publish twenty-four books in a year.

We, the Basque Studies faculty, went to this big conference in London [First International Symposium on Basque Cultural Studies, 2002], and we all stayed at the same university dormitory. Just a word of advice—never stay in a university dorm, especially the one we were in in London. Just awful! They did have a cafeteria downstairs, and so we would go down in the morning and have our breakfast before we went to the conference. One morning Bill and I were sitting together, and he said, "You know what? I look at everything Zulaika's doing, and I should have retired earlier." [laughter] Which I thought was really funny, because there was a definite change.

The first year with Zulaika as director was incredibly exciting and very different. His management style was completely different than Bill's. His energy level was amazing. He had all these things he wanted to do. He didn't know where we were going yet, but he was trying to put together a plan. Faculty meetings were just incredible exercises in near anarchy, which was refreshing, you know, for a while. I think that Zulaika's personality is one of the reasons that we are exploding like a

supernova in all those different directions, and, like I said, a lot of that is very positive.

On a personal level, Zulaika is one of the warmest human beings I've ever known, and so that makes it much easier to accept the chaos or at least forgive chaos on the path to getting things done. When there's a problem is when a human being is not kindhearted or when a human being is ruthless as well as being one of those mega-overachievers, because then there's no joy in it at all. Zulaika has such a personal touch, even though when things go crazy he tends to lock himself in his office and not speak to people. Yet if you go in and talk to him, he's open, and he's warm. Maybe it's a gender thing. I think men in crisis tend to shut up, and women tend to talk. A lot of his personality has opened up different connections for us in the Basque Country.

He is hyperactive, so there's this nonstop activity going on at all times, which really increases the project load, because he has all these ideas, and he wants to accomplish them all while he's director. He's got this personal side to him that makes it easier to accept—well, not easy, because let's face it, sometimes it's crazy—the kinds of change we've been going through. He tries to be open and honest and hear you out. So there are lots of positives in his personality, too.

I'm not saying we didn't have some of that before. Dr. Douglass would certainly sit down and listen to you, but there's this personality difference. I think that's why I started with the anecdote about Bill, when he said, "I should have retired a year ago," because he himself could feel the difference in the energy. That's basically what it comes down to. You do it for so long that you run out of new ideas. And then somebody else takes over, and suddenly, boy, you're thinking differently. Zulaika was a new energy. So it was just a very big change personality-wise for the center.

Basque studies is not a discipline unto itself. It's an interdisciplinary field. We all write about Basque topics, but there are different methodologies being used and different theories being bandied about. The center currently is in an excellent place to pull research from various areas together, and I think that Zulaika is doing a good job with his publications. It's a rather ambitious publication agenda, but it is getting research out to people in English. We felt that one of the functions of the center

was to help disseminate research on Basque studies. So we seem to be going in that direction. That's one of the things that a lot of us had in mind for the center.

Are we really promoting Basque culture if everything has to be done in English, because that limits who gets to read about it? This question is always kind of there at the back of your mind. We have to publish in English because we are part of an American academic university, and the language of that system is English. Our focus as part of an American university is to disseminate information to as many people as possible, in the United States. That has to be a starting point, and, of course, a lot of people in the world read English.

For the center to survive, we have to be able to show the university administration what we're doing, and they have to be able to look at what we're doing and understand it. I think that we'd have a short life term if we didn't publish in English, if we had to provide a translation to our university administration and then have to justify what we're doing and say, "Look, we've just written this magnum opus, and it happens to be in Basque, but take our word for it."

If you're going to publish in other languages you have to have native speakers of those languages working onsite. So if we decided to do that, all of us native English speakers would have to give up our positions, and we'd have to hire natives from the Basque Country who could then conduct the publication agenda in Basque and/or Spanish. The center would have to change completely.

The university is unlikely to fund research that appears only in Basque and Spanish. So we would have to take the center and move it to the Basque Country. We would have to be funded by the Basque university system or the Basque government, and then everybody working here would have to become Basque in order to fulfill that. Even though, on an emotional level I'm sure there are people here, myself included, who cringe now and then at the fact that we have to do everything in English, we really don't have a choice other than publishing in English due to the logistics of the situation and where the funding is coming from.

I think we may also be heading off in directions that I probably wouldn't have thought of or chosen. In the early days, there was an emphasis on the academic. The outreach was limited to making speeches to Elderhostel and those kinds of things. Bill

would go to conferences, and Jill and I would take care of the books. We were an academic place, and we did not go to Basque clubs and dance or any of those things. That was not what we were about.

Now there is a huge shift. We're now a member of NABO, and I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing, but it's obviously a change from that total academic focus to a much more broad-based outreach aspect. I feel that our Ikasi program is our contribution to NABO, and we do a good job with that.

We are also moving into areas that take us even farther away from the academic, like our Basque genealogy project. It's like a rebound. It's like we were way academic over here, and now we're expanding the center's outreach and doing a lot more with the Basque-American community, so we're headed in the other direction. We're bouncing way over there on the other side, and that's just my personal take on it. Considering the history of the center, whatever comes of the genealogy work will probably be a contribution of a major kind to Basque scholarship, even though we're going to have to get there by doing even more outreach.

If we look at the situation of the center in ten years, the things that to me look like we're headed toward total outreach will probably have bounced back toward the middle, because the people conducting that research are academics. So you can't get away from that. We're still academic, but we have to change with the times. The university is interested in outreach, and so the Center for Basque Studies is interested in outreach.

Bill has always been interested in migration, but his interest began in the Basque Country, and he followed it over here. The focus of the program was, and probably for the most part still is, the Basque Country in Europe. Our focus has always been European Basques. There's always been an effort made to stay in touch with *that* culture. Whereas, for other organizations around the American West and North and South America, I think the focus has been more on Basques in the New World.

Now we're starting to enter that territory. We're actually becoming more involved with the Basque-American population, because our focus has started to shift. When I go to American conferences on foreign language and literature to talk about Basque literature, it's almost impossible for me to find someone to relate to. I wind up relating to people who are talking about Spanish literature, but even they don't get it, because I'm talking

about Basque literature as it exists within Spanish literature. I'm not talking as an American reading Spanish literature.

I am constantly being forced to shift my thought process and think less about Basque literature in the Basque Country and more about Basque literature in comparison to other minority literatures *outside* the Basque Country, in order to function in American academic societies, like MLA (Modern Language Association).

Notes

1. The Anglo-American Basque Studies Society was established in 1980. After Darlene Ammons left Basque Studies in 1981, Carmelo Urza edited and distributed the newsletter until 1985. According to the *Basque Studies Program Newsletter*, it had approximately 400 subscribers.

2. Different socio-economic classes met regularly at the Assembly House in the town of Gernika, in the province of Bizkaia. An oak tree outside the Assembly House, known as the Gernika Tree, became the symbol of the province and the local laws.

MARCELINO UGALDE

***M**arcelino “Marc” Ugalde, a second generation Basque American, was born in Fallon, Nevada, in 1963. From the University of Nevada, Reno, he received a BS in biology with a minor in Basque studies in 1986 and a BS in education with a minor in anthropology in 1989. In 1995, he obtained an MA degree in library and information science at the University of Arizona.*

For twenty-two years, Marc was affiliated with UNR’s Basque Studies Library and was the head librarian from 1995 to 2003. Marc was one of the most influential librarians in the development of the Basque Library. During his tenure he was Chair of the Library Faculty and Chair of the Ethnic Studies Program. In 2003, Marc was recognized by Library Journal as one of the “2003 Movers & Shakers” of the librarianship profession in the U.S. and Canada. In June of 2000, he received a Senatorial Recognition Certificate from Richard Bryan, U.S. Senator from Nevada, for his contributions to the Reno Basque Festival Library of Congress Bicentennial Local Legacies Project.

As a remarkable Basque culinary aficionado Marc has taught Basque cooking at UNR and at Truckee Meadows Community College, and he has authored various articles on Basque-European



Marc Ugalde, 2007

cuisine. He has also given a few workshops on Basque genealogy, and speaks Basque and Spanish. Marc is currently the head librarian at Bishop Manogue Catholic High School in Reno.

Love are first sight: first involvement with the library

I had first received information about the Basque Studies Program from my oldest sister, Auriane Ugalde, after I returned to UNR in the fall of 1981 from a visit with a cousin to the Basque Country that summer. My sister had mentioned that there was a position open for a student research assistant. I spoke about the position with Darlene Ammons, who was the Basque Studies Program's assistant coordinator at the time and was also a friend of my sister's. She hired me to help out with certain small administrative tasks for both the program and the library.

Shortly after 1981, Darlene stopped working in the program. Linda White was hired earlier that year, and Jill Berner was out on maternity leave with the birth of twin daughters. She came back after I was hired, and she was in charge of day-to-day



"I had first received information about the Basque Studies Program from my oldest sister." Basque Studies Program student worker, Auriane Ugalde, c. 1977.

activities at the time, so Jill would set up my duties for the day. William Douglass was then out in Australia doing fieldwork.

This may sound a little corny, but it was really kind of a love affair at first sight. I knew the background of the program a little bit through my sister. I had met Jon Bilbao before, and I had listened to interviews given by William Douglass about the Basques in the American West. Actually, the Basque Studies Program was one of the reasons I decided to stay in Nevada versus going outside of the state to go to college. I was well aware of my Basque heritage, and I really wanted to pursue that, and this was an outlet for me to do it. So I was very excited to attend, because I had an opportunity to work in the Basque Studies Program.

I had not met Bill yet. I always had visions of what he would look like. I'd heard his voice a number of times, and then I was the only one

in the library this one particular afternoon when Bill came in. He'd just gotten back from Australia. He was doing some remodeling on his house, and he was wearing some old work boots and jeans. He came in, and I happened to ask him, "Gee, can I help you?" not knowing that it was Bill Douglass. [laughter] He then proceeded to tell me who he was, and I felt very small at that time. That was my first encounter with Bill.

Jon Bilbao had officially retired from the university some time before I came onboard in 1981, but he still remained part of Basque Studies. I didn't see Jon too much those first two years. I don't remember what his actual title was after he retired, but he was still the bibliographer for the program and spent most of his time in the Basque Country. I would meet Jon again the following year, in 1983, as my history teacher in Donostia, when I studied on the very first USAC program directed by Carmelo Urza.

Jon still remained the key person for selecting materials and working with book vendors in Europe. He was the one that set up the acquisition programs with a couple of different bookshops: Linacero, which was a very important one for him, and Kirikiño. Karlos Zarraga, the contact at Kirikiño since the early 1970s, was the gentleman that Jon had known very well and trusted and had set up as a vendor. Then in 1990 we began working with the bookstore Urretxindorra, because Karlos had changed employers¹.

Through Jon's own funding, he continued to work on his Basque bibliography. Jon's collaborator and assistant with *Eusko Bibliographia* in Vitoria-Gasteiz was Luis Moreno. Luis was the main technical person of the two-man team. He started to work with Jon in Linacero, and later, in the late 1970s, in Sancho el Sabio's library. After Jon's death in 1994, Luis was acting director of *Eusko Bibliographia* with a staff of three people.

Jon's greatest contribution to Basque studies was his comprehensive Basque bibliography. For the Basque Studies Program, Jon was always an important person, and he made sure that Reno was aware of certain materials. So through Jon's connections in Europe, his acquaintances would always contact us and send us a number of free materials dealing with political propaganda or cultural posters and pamphlets. The library is really indebted to his care in so many ways, especially with such ephemeral material. In many ways Jon encouraged me to stick with Basque Studies. Jon was a friend and a mentor.

In the fall of 1984, when I returned to UNR after attending USAC in the Basque Country, I continued to work part-time, about twenty hours a week, looking over the collection, adding books to it, reshelving materials, becoming familiar with the collection, and helping patrons with a few things. So it was really, for me, very, very interesting. I just spent hours in the library reading and looking over the materials and talking to all the different visitors, which were not as many as there are today.



"The library is really indebted to his care in so many ways, especially with such ephemeral material." Basque Studies Program assistant coordinator Darlene Ammons and Basque bibliographer Jon Bilbao at the Basque Library in 1980.

The Veyrin and Goñi collections were the basis for establishing a Basque library in Reno. Robert Laxalt was doing fieldwork in the early 1960s in Iparralde—the French-Basque territories—for National Geographic, when he heard through his contacts about a collection for sale by the widow of Philippe Veyrin. Veyrin was a Bascologist or expert on the Basques in the north on the French side, and he had a fairly extensive library collection. So it was really through the efforts of Robert Laxalt

that UNR purchased Veyrin's important collection. The acquisition happened before Bill came onboard as the head of the Basque Studies Program in 1967.

That first year was a very important one for Bill to really decide if this Basque Studies Program was going to be successful. I remember discussions with him about that, and he was very iffy about whether or not the program was going to continue. His major role was looking for funding for the program, so he did a lot of fundraising that first year. But obviously, he was looking for a colleague to work with, and I really don't know how Bill first came in contact with Jon Bilbao. Jon was in the United States at that time teaching on the East Coast and was contacted to see if he would be interested in being a part of this newly created Basque Studies Program. He joined Bill in 1968, one year later.

When Jon arrived in Reno, he got in contact with the widow of Ramón Goñi Nagore. Goñi Nagore was the secretary of the Basque President-in-exile, José Antonio de Aguirre. Goñi was an intellectual from Pamplona who also had an extensive library

about Basques in Spain that would complement Philippe Veyrin's. Without delay, Basque Studies was able to purchase Goñi's library. In addition, some Basque materials from the University of Idaho were also acquired.

Looking back to the early writings of both Bill and Jon, the creation of this ethnic research program was inconceivable without establishing a research library. So it was from very early on that the initial founders of the Basque Studies Program understood the importance of establishing a strong, comprehensive research collection.

Jon never considered himself to be a librarian. He was a bibliographer, a linguist, a historian. He did not have official training in librarianship. When the Basque Studies Program moved out of DRI to the university campus library in 1972, the Basque Studies Program's Library would now begin to receive the necessary care it deserved! For whatever reason, the prestigious Basque Library received little attention.

Because of Jon, bless his heart, again, not being a librarian, he just put everything in accession order. This system was adequate since the collection was small. It was not that much of a problem for people to browse the shelving—"this is what's new"—and we would add a few hundred items annually. That was OK. But by the mid 1980s we began growing the collection and systematically purchasing more materials from Europe and Latin America, and we needed assistance to get the material processed properly.

In the 1970s, through Jon's efforts, UNR library cataloger Yoshi Hendricks officially began to catalog the Basque collection in a regular flow as best as they could. Yoshi lent her expertise. Jon and Yoshi became friends. She had studied and lived in Pamplona and was fond of the Basque culture.

However, the Basque collection always seemed too exotic to the catalogers. I know this for a fact through my years of talking to some of the old catalogers who were there when I first started working. Nobody had had expertise in the language, so Basque materials were always put on the back burner. "Oh, we'll get to it, we'll get to it, we'll get to it. Oh, you know, we just don't have time." But through the efforts of Yoshi, we were able to begin really getting some official cataloging by following the Library of Congress system.

The work was limited, and the library still didn't see the need to begin to move the daily processes of organizing and classifying Basque materials into the steady stream of university materials. So that was kind of done on an ad hoc basis until the first librarian, María Otero-Boisvert, was hired in 1986.

Having a research center housed within a library, that in itself was always a major source of misunderstanding for many years. They had the Oral History Program and Basque Studies, but neither of them were library departments. They were left alone, totally autonomous from the library administration. But the funny thing with the Basque Studies Program was that we had this library that needed some attention.

We're talking about functions that the centralized library could perform to assist us in moving things around. But the Basque Studies Library's major role was interacting with the faculty and visiting scholars. The major clientele of the Basque Library was foreign scholars and students or Basque Americans who were not affiliated with UNR.

At the time, there was no administrative distinction, no separation between the program and the collection. There was no Basque Library as a separate entity from the Basque Studies Program. They were all one. It was an ethnic studies research program with its own library, and it was totally self-sufficient. To a certain extent, the library/program was somewhat of a museum, because we displayed some Basque art—paintings, drawings, sculptures, tree carvings—and flags.

Our patrons, Basque Americans (most of our visitors to the Basque Library at the time), always viewed the library and the program as one entity, *never* making any distinction between the two. Both elements functioned together, understanding that one couldn't function without the other. There was no need of a Basque Library if you didn't have the research program and vice versa.

USAC, 1983

I studied abroad with the USAC program for a year in 1983. At that time, USAC was called University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium, which was established one year earlier. Carmelo Urza came to Reno in 1982 and took an office in the

Basque Studies Program to run the Basque Studies abroad program. At the beginning USAC was an organic part of the Basque Studies Program, and it became a monumental event in the history of the program. I don't think anyone would suspect that today, obviously, because of the growth and the programs that it had all over the world.

Carmelo had participated as an administrator-teacher on the Oñati program, which operated out of Boise. Pat Bieter, a professor at Boise State University, managed it. So the idea of USAC grew out of the Oñati program. They had made the decision that Oñati was still too small a town, not cosmopolitan enough, to attract enough students outside of Basque families. Finally the site selected was Donostia-San Sebastián. I believe the Oñati program hadn't run since 1979.

I had visited my grandfather's natal village and house in the summer of 1981, when I graduated from high school. I went with a cousin from Winnemucca, Belzarena. We were the same age, and we grew up together. His grandmother was my grandfather's sister, and she was the owner of the family *baserri*. His paternal grandmother was from Urepel, and his paternal grandfather was from Eugi, Navarra. But his father was born and raised in the U.S. His mother was my father's first cousin, and my father and grandfather brought her over in 1962 on a tourist visa. My grandfather quickly found her a husband. [laughter] She was from the same small village of Angiozar—a *barrio* [neighborhood] of Bergara, Gipuzkoa—as my grandfather.

We spent a month in my grandfather's house, where my cousin's grandmother was born, and then we traveled around Europe, as well. That was my very first experience with the Basque Country, and shocking indeed it was, because I was envisioning a more traditional country after hearing the stories from my grandfather and my father. Of course, it was different. This was a few years after the death of Franco, and there was major change and growth in the Basque Autonomous Community. I enjoyed visiting very much. Being over there for a summer as well as working at the Basque Program for two years really reinforced my desire to learn the Basque language.

Kate Camino, her sister, Marguerite, and I were among the very first group of students—the founding group—that went to the Basque Country in 1983 with USAC. (I had already met Marguerite at the Basque Studies Program, because she studied

Basque under Gorka Aulestia.) We left in June and spent the first five weeks with intensive language training in Fuenterrabia [Hondarribia in Basque]. Then in October we moved to Donostia to live with families and/or in apartments for the remainder of the year.

At the beginning, the majority of students studied Basque, although I decided to study Spanish as well. Out of forty-five students, forty-two were all studying Basque, and only three were studying Spanish. After the first year, the reverse is true. Most people go to Donostia to study Spanish, and just a few study Euskara.

I studied under Jon Bilbao, Sandra “Sandy” Ott, Joseba Zulaika, and Iñaki Aguirre, who taught Basque political institutions. I also studied Basque cooking with Juan Mari Arzak, who gave us two or three classes, and Pedro Subijana, who taught a class. The cuisine class was one of my favorite things. For me, gastronomy was ultimate, because I love food. So I really ate my way around the Basque Country. [laughter]

Sandy Ott was the on-site director during the first abroad program, and I was in her anthropology course. So I went around the Basque Country doing fieldwork with her quite often, and we visited and stayed with different families. I was in every province spending time studying. I went to Santazi in Zuberoa or Xiberoa, to Aramaiona in Araba, where Sandy was doing research, and I got to go on a *jabalí* [wild boar] hunt. I also went to Alkiza, just outside of Tolosa, where Sandy knew a couple of bachelor shepherds.

I spent a couple of weeks living with them. My fieldwork topic was to compare Basque shepherding in Europe versus the system of shepherding in the American West. For me it was a very interesting project. Many students said to me, “How could you do that? There is no bathroom in the house! How can you spend two weeks with no night life there in Alkiza?” [laughter] Everything I did in that *baserri* was work—going out with the shepherd in the morning, making cheeses, or learning how to milk the ewes. What I liked about it was that I got a chance to make cheese.

I also got the chance to talk to my grandfather’s youngest sister, the baby of the family, who lived in Oñati. In fact, for my dialectology class, I studied a sample of her dialect from Oñati. So I had a smattering of linguistics study there, as well.

Having contact with so many people was very fulfilling, rewarding, satisfying—an amazing experience. It was very interesting to meet some of the families and all the different characters while traveling with Sandy. It was the opportunity of getting to know more about the people in the place where my grandparents came from. It was reconnecting with the language.

The most important thing was to modernize the feelings of nationalism, of a sense of identity. We students were always called Americans, and even if you were Basque American, you always understood yourself to be at least partially Basque. But many people over there told me, “You’re not Basque. You’re American. Maybe you have Basque ancestors, but you live in America. You don’t live in the Basque Country today, so you’re not Basque.” That was kind of hard to swallow, initially.

In fact, that year a woman from the Basque Country named Begoña Prado met my parents when she was working in Reno on a cataloging project at the Basque Library. She had gone back for Christmas to visit her family, and she invited me for New Year’s. They were from Algorta. Her younger brother, his girlfriend, and I went to a party for New Year’s 1984.

Her brother was very interested in an American coming over to study Basque. I definitely had more sentiment of feeling Basque than he did, being from Algorta. So there was a whole conflict arising over the questions they asked me, “Why would you come from the United States to learn Basque?” Over that small discussion there was somewhat of a conflict between the young men at the New Year’s party. Of course, alcohol had something to do with it, too, I’m sure. [laughter]

I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I would never in all my life trade that experience, even though it postponed my studies at UNR for a year. There was no way I was going to miss that opportunity. It moved me toward becoming a Basque librarian. It helped me develop skills and made me more aware of Basque culture and Basque history.

María Otero-Boisvert and Ellen Brow

After my year in Europe, I came back as a student assistant for the Basque Studies Program for the next two years. I would have loved to continue working with the library, but due to financial reasons I became employed elsewhere. Then within a



"There was no way I was going to miss that opportunity. It moved me toward becoming a Basque librarian. It helped me develop skills and made me more aware of Basque culture and Basque history." Marc Ugalde in his office at the Basque Library, c. 1986.

year I realized that I wanted to get back to the university, so I started a degree program in secondary education in 1987.

By then, they had actually held the very first application and interview process for a professional librarian for the Basque Studies Program, and they hired María Otero-Boisvert from, I think, University of Michigan, in 1986. Then, María hired me as a library assistant in 1987, because I had good knowledge of the collection. I also did some cataloging for her during those years.

The first professional librarian was half-time in Basque Studies and half-time in cataloging, so she had to divide her time that way. Half of her salary was paid by Basque Studies and half paid by the central library.

María didn't stay long in Basque Studies. She was very capable, but she was very frustrated with the amount of work needed to improve the library. María left in 1989. Her husband had been admitted to graduate school at Columbia University in New York,



"María hired me as a library assistant in 1987, because I had good knowledge of the collection." Basque Librarian María Otero-Boisvert, c. 1988.

and she decided to move with him, so she had to resign her position.

For the next year I was left on my own, and I pretty much took care of the Basque collection. I was only a Library Assistant I, but Basque Studies didn't want to increase my rank. I am not sure why. I was performing some of the professional duties. I was still a student, and I functioned as that, working part-time and going to school.

Then they hired Ellen Brow from Harvard University. She came onboard

July 1, 1989, and that's why I decided to leave. I mean, there was not adequate funding for two people in the Basque Library. I decided to go to the Basque Country for the entire summer to study Spanish and Basque culture through USAC. I came back and finished my degree in teaching in 1989, and I was hired by Sparks High School in 1990.

In 1993, Ellen resigned her position. She became very frustrated in dealing with the library administration on how to move the daily library operations and tasks into the workflow of the general library. Many things had happened since the days of Jon Bilbao, when he oversaw the collection on a daily basis. They were beginning to purchase more media for instruction and for patrons. The volume of material coming into the library had really increased, and there were more and more contacts with rare book dealers.

Ellen felt overwhelmed. (I felt that myself at times, dealing with the workload. It's incredible for one person to work alone in the Basque Library.) I think, too, through Ellen's frustration in trying to implement a more professional process and to move the library into the modern age of technology, she ran into many hurdles and roadblocks. Her answer was to ignore the Basque collection, and she became very involved with library committees

and university committees, and unfortunately, the Basque Library really suffered for a couple of years.

After I had taught Spanish for two years, Bill Douglass called me into his office and said, "We need some help." He wanted to know if I would consider coming back to the library from a teaching career in the public schools. I had to think about it. Bill offered to help me pursue my professional library degree, so I'd be able to apply for the position whenever it opened up. For me that was sufficient, and I was actually jubilant to come back to the Basque Program and Library.

So I did come back, and I was the interim librarian for them until the position opened. Dr. Douglass and I understood that there was a possibility that I might not be the best candidate for them in the interview process, and I accepted that, but I did my best. I started in June of 1992 and worked there until June 2003.

I strongly believe that there was somewhat of an embarrassment in relation to the issue of Ellen Brow on the part of the Basque Studies Program's administration. Bill was out of the country for part of the time that Ellen was there, and maybe there wasn't a strong understanding of how the library should really operate and function within the existing structure of the Basque Studies Program's administration. She saw that maybe the fit was better with the main library than with the program.



Librarian Ellen Brow, 1990.

When I came back to the library, there were books stacked up in the aisles between the ranges of bookshelving. There were carts everywhere full of materials. You couldn't get into her office. It was from floor to ceiling full of book packages that she hadn't opened in two years. Obviously, there was also some major frustration with the Basque Studies faculty at that time, wanting to look at new research or anything newly published.

The split between the library and the program

The first year I reported to Jill Berner, the office manager and program assistant at the time. I spent the next years, from 1992 to 1995, working with the collection as the Library Assistant II. My position was a state classified position, not a professional position, and at the beginning my salary was coming out of the program. Then, when I made the move from a classified position to the Basque Librarian position, I began to be paid by the library. We were receiving help in different areas, from different departments of the library, in processing and dealing with our periodicals, our serials. But still the authority was left to the Basque Studies Program and to the Basque Library. I went on to do the basic duties of library work, and it was a great challenge to get the Basque collection operating again.

In 1993 discussions began between Bill Douglass and the dean of libraries, Steven Zink, for the purpose of administratively separating the Basque Library from the Basque Studies Program. They made decisions about the collection and about what I was doing that directly affected me, but I was not made a part of those decisions. I was not asked what I thought.

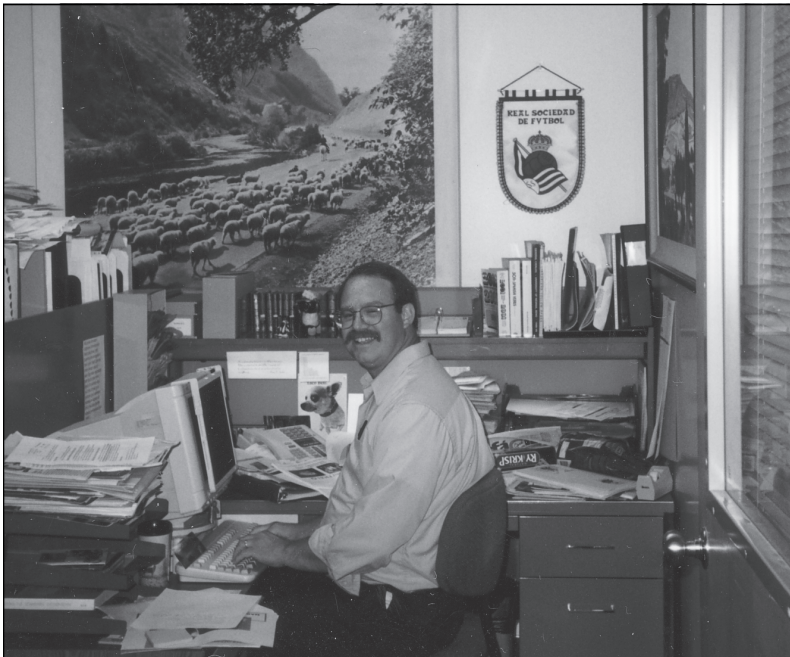
In 1993 we had the official separation of administrative powers among the two entities, the program and the library collection. Then we realized that the program, later to become the Center for Basque Studies, and the library could no longer be housed together. So in 1997 we actually had a physical break between the two due to space constraints. When we were housed together, it was obviously a natural fit. But the program needed more offices, and the library needed more room, too, because the collection doubled from 1992 to 2003. Both the program and the library needed to grow. Basque Studies moved to what used to be the Oral History office [in Gethcell Library]. There was a subsequent move for the Basque Studies Program, out of the administrative control of the library and into the College of Arts and Science, which was a natural progression.

After the split, my supervisor became Mike Simons, who was the head of reference, or was it Milton Wolf? Traditionally, the Basque Librarian worked with collection development.

There was quite a bit of confusion the first two years after separating and creating two different entities—a Basque Library entity and then the Basque Studies Program. There was also some

confusion in dealing with personnel from the library. "Well, what's going on? Now you're a separate entity? We are no longer dealing with the program?" Basque Studies always remained autonomous within the library, but the poor Basque Library lost all autonomy.

We began to see the dilemmas of who had authority to make decisions. We saw a bit of a problem coming down the pike with who really controlled the Basque Library. Was it the Basque Studies Program? We had always felt that the library belonged to the program. I think it was very clear for the library administration, under the years of Harold Morehouse as the director of libraries, that the Basque Library belonged to the Basque Studies Program. In the 1980s we had financial help coming to the Basque Library, and the Basque Studies Program felt it was something that the university should do to help, but the collection was still theirs.



"I went on to do the basic duties of library work, and it was a great challenge to get the Basque collection operating again." Marc Ugalde working in his office in the Getchell Library, c. 1992-1993.

When we actually had this administrative split in 1993, there was the question of, "Oh, who does the Basque collection belong to?" The main library assumed that they owned it. "It is ours, and we have more decision-making power than the program." Now the library took complete administrative and financial control of the Basque collection, and that was a big shift. So, who owns it? That's a tough question to answer. I would say *both* entities, and that is exactly what I heard in different conversations from the central library and Basque Studies. The dean said that it's his library, and the program said it's their library.

At the time, I thought that the separation between both entities and the change of power and control was good for the Basque Library. But in retrospect, it's been a major detriment to the library and to the program. I personally don't feel that the separation was in the best interests of Basque Studies and/or the Basque Library, and I strongly believe this. It's not just because I was fired in 2003. I think we all see the results of what has replaced me, at least currently, in moving the Basque Library into the twenty-first century.

To some extent the separation has benefited the collection in that it now receives more attention from the central library. From a collection standpoint, getting involved a little bit more with the central library on campus helped me to begin to see some of the weaknesses in the services and areas of instruction for our visiting scholars and graduate students. From that perspective, it has helped to pursue a more systematic approach and to mainstream some of our functions, such as processing materials into the daily workflow of the libraries.

The separation also brought a little more visibility for me. I attended many different library meetings and brought more matters of the Basque Library into the main library. However, I felt like my colleagues in the library never really understood the unique nature of a specialized librarian versus the everyday duties of a general undergraduate library with a little emphasis on graduate work.

For instance, the library administration became puzzled when I requested some monies from the library to attend the 1994 Basque book fair in Durango, in the Basque Country. Their response was that there wasn't really any need for a librarian to go to Durango. I had to write proposals to the dean requesting

the trip, but we finally got them to agree. [Marc also attended the Durango book fair in 1997 and 2002.] I think there was a little bit of jealousy among the librarians about some of my duties and what I was able to do. "How does the Basque Librarian get a chance to travel to Europe and participate in functions there, and not us?"

I think the split also provided a sense of relief for Basque Studies who no longer had to supervise someone outside their realm of understanding of the duties and expectations of a professional librarian. Basque Studies had an input into the development of the library only through me. But I was constantly being reprimanded by the library administration, especially the last three years of my tenure, because I was spending too much time with the Basque faculty. Holy cow! I was spending way too much time with the center.



"I think there was a little bit of jealousy among the librarians about some of my duties and what I was able to do." Marc Ugalde at the Book and Music Fair in Durango, Basque Country, 1994. Left to right: Journalist Miel Elustondo, his then wife, Blanca, Marc Ugalde, singer Mikel Laboa, and Mikel's (unidentified) friend.

On a couple of occasions, face to face, I was asked by Steve Zink, "Where does your loyalty lie, with the library or with the center?"

I told him, "Sir, it is to both. I exist because of the center, but I perform a function that coincides with the work of the central library." He did not reply. I think up until the separation that question was inconceivable, because it was well understood what function the library had within the program.

In that split, the central library began to see, "We've taken over the Basque collection. How do you manage it?" I saw myself as a mediator between Basque Studies and the library administration. And I think there was some success there, because I was able to help my colleagues in the library to see a little more of what was going on in the center, the unique nature of the collection, and how our services didn't always mesh with what needed to occur in a general university library.

I was also able to help in certain decisions, such as changes in services or how to deal with vendors in the future. At the same time, I was able to help the center to understand how things were done in a university library environment in the United States. So I think it was good for both sides, because I think there was that communication.

For me it was a constant game of not playing one loyalty against another, but being a facilitator of library work. I also understood that Basque Studies still felt that it was the rightful, or majority, owner of the Basque collection, but I also understood that the library had appropriated a fairly substantial amount of money to the Basque Library for purchasing materials and electronic services, especially in my last years working at UNR. On the other hand, Basque Studies had always received special grants or gifts from families for the library.

It has always been my understanding and belief that without this administrative split there was no sense of split identity, at least, when I was the librarian, because the center and the library were one. One entity existed only because of the other, and the Basque Library was just kind of piggybacking onto services and/or processing from the main library. There was no identity crisis.

I knew exactly why the Basque Library existed—to support the curriculum and the research needs of Basque Studies. That was my mission, and that philosophy became a bit of a problem

for the central library. For me the true challenge was to strongly communicate between the two worlds, one of a library nature and the other of specialized research. But if someone didn't understand that, then it became an identity crisis. Even after the physical separation of the two entities, I never saw myself completely apart from the program, because I couldn't function without the program. In fact, I maintained a position on the Basque Studies faculty—as a nonvoting member, but still a member of their faculty.

During my last years as the Basque Librarian I participated in some of the designing for the new library. The library administration really didn't want the Center for Basque Studies in the Knowledge Center. If Basque Studies wanted to be housed in the new library—and supposedly the dean of libraries was not against it—they needed to come up with their own funding. That was not *my* idea. That was coming down from the library administration. So if there have been recent developments or evolutions of these plans, of which I am not aware, then they're finally getting their act together. They might begin to see that the Basque Library and the program are not separate, that they are one and the same.

A dream come true: collection development and funding

While working full time for the Basque Studies Program, I pursued graduate work in library information science from the University of Arizona with the help of Basque Studies. I went down to Tucson, Arizona, the summer of 1995 to take my comprehensive exam and orals, and I completed the degree on time. I then had a professional degree and was ready to apply for the job that fall, 1995, as the Basque Librarian for the Basque Studies Program. I applied for the position and was selected, and Dean Zink approved the appointment to the Basque Studies Library. A dream came true. I could not believe it. This was something I had waited many years for. "All right. This is going to be under *my* total direction now."

I wrote a new collection development policy, which is a tool of the trade that states what we will collect and where we will make purchases in continuing to build the Basque Library. I looked over what my predecessor, Ellen Brow, had done, and then I modified that.

I got in touch with many publishers and vendors in the Basque Country and Latin America in order to purchase materials. My goal definitely was to maintain the integrity of the vision of Jon Bilbao in order to build a comprehensive collection of Basque materials, as well as the most complete collection on the Basque diaspora. Around 1992, there were between 21,000 and 25,000 volumes, and I took the collection to almost 60,000 volumes. I more than doubled it during my tenure. I think that my tenure was an era of positive growth and development, even with the separation. I built the first Basque Studies Library Web site in 1998.

There was definitely a paradigm shift in the philosophy of collecting materials between Jon Bilbao and I. Jon developed the Basque Studies Library collection at the time of Franco's regime, in which many things were not officially collected in the Basque Country *per se*, and they could possibly have been destroyed. Jon was very worried, and he believed in collecting *everything*—from a matchbook to a little, old cardboard of a particular pub or bar. Everything was fair game for the Basque Studies Program collection.

Through some discussions with Jon, I strongly believe that he saw Reno as maybe not *the* place for permanently holding everything, but as a place where materials could be kept to preserve the cultural patrimony of the Basque people. But Jon also had an idea, a philosophy: the materials were there to use. If the Library of Congress, Harvard University, or Yale had a particular book or materials that we didn't have, that was OK. It was something we didn't need to acquire, because it was already in good hands. We could get access to it. But, at the same time, he encouraged you to collect as *much* as you could.

During my tenure in the library, we came to a point where space became a big issue, and we had to be a little more judicious on what we were purchasing. So I had to rely more on what was being utilized by visiting scholars or faculty but still develop a very comprehensive collection. I thought that we could become the strongest, most comprehensive collection of Basque diaspora materials in the world, and that was really my main focus—not that we were not as concerned with materials about Euskadi [the Basque Country], but I pursued many more avenues in building up the collection from a diaspora point of view.

We also focused some attention on purchasing archives. I came in contact with an antiquarian book dealer out of Bilbao, who had known Jon Bilbao, and he offered some very nice materials. In 1999, we purchased the Huarte Jáuregui Archives on the Spanish Civil War, the most complete archives dealing with Basque materials. The documents provide information from the popular front and the nationalist front. They were put together by an archivist himself, Huarte Jáuregui, who was also a commandant in the Basque Country. From the same vendor we were able to purchase some nineteenth-century archives on the Carlist wars.

I was also asked by Basque Studies to purchase different collections, such as Julio Goien Aguado's private library from Argentina. Most of the monies to purchase that collection came from the central library, but the program had to come up with a fair amount of money, as well, to help purchase it.

Now that the Basque Library was under the control of the central library, I had to make myself more visible to my colleagues in the library, so they could see that I was a team player. Consequently, I worked about three hours a week on the main reference desk. I knew also that I had to play the games of the central library, and I had to get involved in things that took me out of the Basque Library. I was expected to get involved in other university committees, because of my tenure-track position. I was placed in the first-year or "freshman experience" program, and then I got involved with the ethnic studies committee and became its chair for two years. All those tasks took me out of the Basque Library. There were advantages and disadvantages, and initially I didn't think that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages.

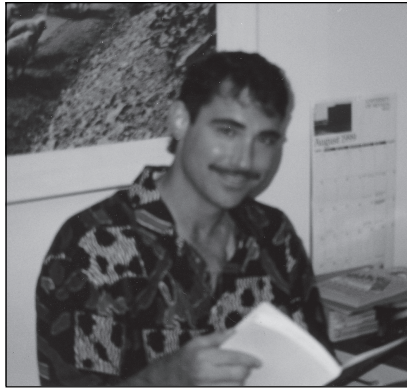
But what it came down to in the end was that Basque Studies faculty began to ask me why I wasn't around more in the Basque Studies Library. At the same time, the main library was upset because I wasn't doing more things for the central library and thought I should be doing less for the center. So it was a difficult role to play to keep peace with both entities. It wasn't easy to show my library colleagues that there was some professionalism in the Basque Library and to show the Basque Studies Program that we were making strides and moving the library collection where it should go—into the twenty-first century.

On top of that, I did all the work alone in those first years, until I was finally allowed to have an assistant through the generosity of Bill Douglass. Bill allowed some monies to be identified for an assistant in the Basque Library. For the first time ever, we had two people professionally working on the collection.

My first assistant was Juan Ibarguren, a graduate student in history, who had come to Reno from the Basque Country, because he had heard about the Basque Studies Program while living in New York. He had helped to catalog a portion of the Basque Library between 1994 and 1996, and after the project was completed I subsequently hired him for a year and a half to be my assistant. His computer skills were fair, and his language skills and knowledge of the culture were very much appreciated. So we were able to grow, but then he decided to move to San Diego.

After that I spent some months alone while we did the search process, which was never easy, and we hired Brett Copeland in 2000. Brett had already worked in the library, in Acquisitions and then Serials. Brett was also of Basque descent; his mother was an Erquiaga. Brett worked with me for two years. Then I hired Demosthenes “Dee” Papaeliou from Chicago. [Dee was the Basque Assistant Librarian from 2002 to 2004.] So in my tenure, from 1993-2003, I had three assistants, which required a fair amount of training. So it was never easy.

When Basque Studies was moved to the UNR campus, it remained a statewide program, which was its funding source. The Oral History Program got started, as well, as a statewide program for the university. It really wasn’t out of the base budget, the funding source of the university itself. I think that was important, and Bill really understood that, because no one could touch the funding that allowed the program to begin to grow—slowly but significantly—over time.



“Brett was also of Basque descent; his mother was an Erquiaga.” Basque Assistant Librarian Brett Copeland at the Basque Library, 1999.



Basque Assistant Librarian Dee Papaeliou and Marc Ugalde, c. 2002

With what operating monies the program had in the early years they bought materials for the library. Whenever there were donations, I'm sure that went to help with library materials.

Bill Douglass has always been a strong supporter of the Basque Studies Program. I know he has provided help many times. Jon Bilbao, in the early years, also purchased materials for the library with his own private funds. The grants and outside funding used to purchase the initial Basque archives leave no doubt that it was the Basque Studies Program that owned those materials. The Basque Library was really a private collection for the program.

In the mid-1980s those lines became blurred. The Basque Library, as part of the program, first received a small portion of the library budget through the efforts of María Otero-Boisvert.

When I first took over the Basque Library in 1992, the central library was still feeling the high from an evaluation or recognition by the university that the Basque Studies Program was an area of excellence in the university system. Basque Studies received a very high rating, based upon our collection development officer, Milton Wolf, who had been in the library for a number of years. It was a rating that the university as a whole did among the different colleges and departments. I left in 1989, and then I was

hired again in 1992, so somewhere in between that time Basque Studies was recognized as a program of excellence.

Personally, Milton Wolf really liked the program and thought it was important and unique at the university and was very generous with the Basque Studies Program, with the dean's approval. This was the *first* time that the program received 1 percent of the total library annual budget for the university. That was approximately \$30,000 at the time, and the Basque Library began to grow from there. Through my years, from 1995 to 2003, I was able to move up to 2.7 percent of the total budget, just under \$100,000 annually.

When Milton left to take a job in the Midwest around 1997, Steven Zink began to see that this rating, this recognition as a program of excellence, held no more weight for the Basque Library. So I had to demonstrate that we deserved our monies. I'm not saying that the dean didn't recognize that Basque Studies was a valued research program at UNR, but we would no longer have the luxury of receiving monies because of this previous recognition.

So a standard formula was adopted on how to allocate funds to each of the different library fields or specialized libraries at UNR. The dean would still say that he felt he was more than generous in allocating our funds, but it was never really clear that he followed a formula—for us, anyway. I don't think that the central library had any interest in the Basque collection, besides the monetary aspect.

Donnelyn "Donnie" Curtis was hired after Milton left. That position was modified to supervise all the specialized branch libraries on campus. I fit in as a specialized library, so she became my supervisor.

I began to see more and more concerns coming from Donnie. "Why are you purchasing that? What's this for?" They put pressure on me by questioning my decisions on purchasing for the Basque Studies Library in the later years, particularly from 2000 on. Someone who didn't know the field questioned the validity of the purchases, "Well, if no one's going to use it" How would they know? It became this whole thing of use versus value, in relation to a comprehensive collection of Basque studies materials. I think they recognized that certain things would be happening in the future.

With my departure, they could begin to absorb possibly more monies. It's easier to make those reductions in the allocations without someone there with a greater knowledge of what would be needed for the Basque Library in the future. Of course, I can only speculate, but I think time will tell. I strongly believe that the administration really didn't care to spend that much on the Basque Library. Its budget increased up until about 2000, and then it was fairly steady for the next three years. Actually, in 2003, I believe, it took a \$10,000 reduction.

A stolen dream

For me there was never a sense of being disloyal to the library administration or the Center for Basque Studies by my working with either entity. But in the last few years before I left, I noticed that there was always a major tone *against* me, a major character flaw maybe, because the dean of libraries saw what he considered more loyalty to Basque Studies than to the library. Again, not numerous times, but many times, I was asked by Dean Zink where my loyalty was. I never viewed it as such, but I think this definitely played into not being granted tenure.

I was too much a part of the center maybe, because I had too much of a familial connection with the faculty and not just a working relationship. The dean wanted somebody neutral, somebody working mostly for the library with a few responsibilities to the center, even though I was involved with library instruction and helped out at the main reference desk for the general library. But it wasn't good enough. Maybe I didn't get tenure because I didn't try to publish some things that the dean thought I should publish. That may have been a factor.

Many on the teaching faculty and in university administration firmly believe that a librarian should not have tenure on school campuses, mainly because our terminal degree is not a doctorate. It can lie with a master's. So we're not qualified to really be under that tenure umbrella. Librarians, on the other hand, would defend it on the fact that we think we are professionals. We do some similar things, especially trying to publish, and the whole key is trying to define what librarians should publish, because many librarians are research oriented.

I think determining who should get tenure and who shouldn't is left too much up to subjectivity and mostly to the dean. Based upon my own situation where I successfully met all the criteria, it is my understanding that the dean had a lot of input there. I would say that a lot of interpretation of data comes from our annual evaluation. We have a different measurement in our annual evaluation since we don't teach, and then they expect us to do a whole lot of research.

Our publication record doesn't have to meet the same type of criteria or standards as that of teaching faculty, plus we are on a twelve-month contract, and we don't have time off. We're not on a nine-month contract where we would have time to go out and actually do more research. We're on a more service-based structure, which doesn't allow you a whole lot of time to do research. Basically, we're not seen as equals on the same field.

In my case there was a much stronger and different interpretation of my position as a Basque Librarian. Where did I fit into a library field, which was geared toward a general undergraduate university library? Another element to my demise was the library's interpretation or understanding of what a Basque Librarian does.

I was a specialized librarian, and there is no other similar position to mine. I didn't even fit as a branch librarian. If you are a music librarian, all the universities have music librarians. You can look at how your colleagues do their job and what they publish. You have engineering librarians, science librarians, and medical librarians, and all other universities have those, but no one else has a Basque Librarian, so what does a Basque Librarian really do?

In the number of years I was at UNR, I tried to help the administration see what a Basque Librarian does that doesn't fit into the picture of a general undergraduate library. Are language skills important in a position like mine? Absolutely. But it is known that our dean doesn't care that the Basque or the Spanish languages are so important, even though that was one of the criteria for hiring me, at least according to the announcement that went out for the position. So I think it was just a total subjective interpretation of my record. As I went through the years for the tenure process, everything looked good. I was on the proper path of doing well, and the interpretation by the dean obviously was something different.

The first committee to review my tenure application was within the library itself. Within each college, typically, there is a committee that evaluates their own candidates coming up for tenure, and I always had the unanimous decision by my colleagues to be granted tenure. Then you compiled a list of names of people who may not necessarily know you, because they didn't want you to send your tenure application to people that you knew. Those people might be aware of the type of needs or duties that you performed, and they might be slightly familiar with your work, so they would be able to judge and evaluate your tenure application on work duties. The evaluation that came back from a peer review was that they all believed that I should be granted tenure.

Then it went to the university committee and tenure promotion committee. But before it went to the overall school committee, it went to the dean of the college, and they accept or decline tenure or promotion. The dean had denied tenure in my case, so it didn't even go to the university-wide committee until I asked for a review, and when that happened, they approved it, as well, recommending an increase in salary. They usually grant a salary increase with your tenure at UNR.

But the dean still had a say. So in my case, even though three levels of peer review said yes, one person said no, and that's what stood. So was it a personality thing? The dean said no, because he believed, based solely on my record, that I didn't deserve tenure. Again, it's the interpretation of what a specialized person does, and I don't believe the dean really understood it.

The dean had a different idea of the type of restructuring he wanted with a new person in charge of the Basque Library. He wanted that person to have more affiliation to the library and just a slight sense of responsibility to the center and its faculty.

Jon Bilbao was completely with the Basque Studies Program, totally identified and working with it. He was a bibliographer, but he tried to develop some relationships within the library to help process and move materials and get them cataloged properly. Then they hired professional librarians, María Otero-Boisvert and Ellen Brow, right after him, and they were half time with the program and half time with the library, understanding that their connection with the library was just to process this Basque material.

Then I came along, and initially I was seen as totally with the program. Then I moved as a completely independent entity

out of the program to be tied with the central library. So the program lost having even half a say over what the duties of their Basque Librarian were. Basque Studies totally lost power over the library.

It was a huge balancing act—trying to keep the library happy by being a true colleague of theirs, caring for the overall university library, participating in their meetings and what have you, and then trying to meet the needs of my clientele, which were the Basque Studies faculty and visiting scholars. So it was a very difficult balancing act, and I guess I didn't do too well, but I see that it's going to be difficult for anyone to do that.

Notes

1. In a conversation with Karlos Zarraga (May 3, 2007), he stated that Jon Bilbao used to acquire books from different bookstores. From Linacero, he obtained books related to the province of Araba, from Manterola, books on Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, and from Gómez de Pamplona, books on Navarre. Then, he would acquire books about Iparralde when he would visit that part of the country.

JOXE MALLEA-OLAETXE

*J*oxe Koldo Mallea-Olaetxe was born in 1940 in Munitibar, Bizkaia. He obtained a bachelor's degree in arts from Pius Mortara College in Oñati, Gipuzkoa, in 1964. Immediately after, he was sent to the U.S. as a member of the Order of the Lateran Canons. Some years later, in 1985, now secularized, Joxe received an MA in Latin American history at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. In 1988, Joxe earned a PhD in Basque studies with an emphasis in history from the University of Nevada, Reno.

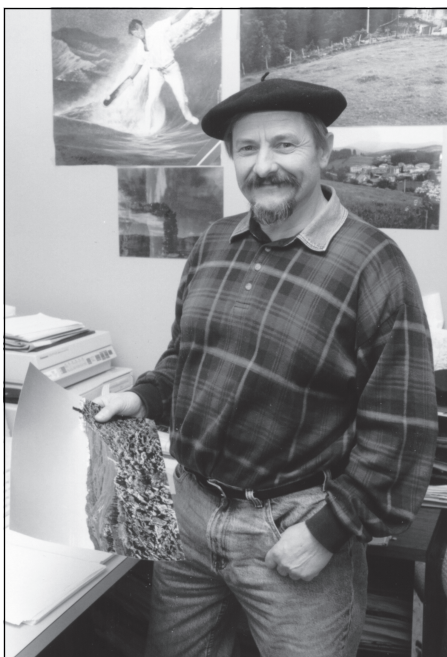
Joxe is the leading authority on Basque arborglyphs (tree carvings) in the American West and maintains the largest database of its kind in the country. In this regard he advises federal, state, and local agencies, as well as individual archaeologists and historians, on ways to best record and safeguard the history of the Basques by maintaining tree carvings and sheep camps. Joxe is a history instructor at Truckee Meadows Community College, where he has taught for nearly two decades, and an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Basque Studies.

Zumarraga, tree carvings, and oral literature

I came to the U.S. in 1964, and I worked in New York for a number of years. The first time I heard about the Basque Studies Program was probably in 1965 or 1966, and that's when Bill Douglass came to New York to talk to me, but I don't know if that was the first time I saw him. I also knew about Bill from other sources. We had mutual friends in Bizkaia, and, of course, I was very involved with the Basque culture and language at that time, as I was in the old country. I knew about all his efforts in Nevada, and I might have written to him before that. I was very proud that Nevada was doing something like that.

I studied in Oñati, and in the early 1960s we published a magazine in Basque called *Erein*. I remember that we used to buy every Basque book available—actually, a little money came from the States—and I read just about every book that was out there during the Franco years. That was our early school in Basque studies. I was very involved with everything that was Basque—the history, the language. Actually, it was the language that interested me at first. I consider myself a frustrated linguist. I realized that there were a lot of opinions and theories on the Basque language, but nothing was clear. Nobody really knew what the real answer was. I just let it go and started reading and studying history.

So I had this early relationship with Bill, and I always had Basque Studies in the back of my mind, because it was very important to me, but then there was a hiatus of quite a few years. [From 1979 to 1984, Joxe worked with handicapped adults in



Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe, 2000

Crete, Nebraska.] During this time I made several visits to Reno. I had visited Reno in 1966 for the first time. I had a sister in Winnemucca, Nevada, and I had lived in Nevada for years before I went to UNR in the 1980s, so I wasn't a stranger to Nevada. [Joxe was involved with a weekly Basque-radio program in Elko and Winnemucca from 1968 to 1971.]

Then I decided to go back to college, and I got an MA in Latin American history from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in 1985. I had a chance to stay in Nebraska and do a PhD in early colonial Latin American history. In Nebraska they had strong faculty and everything, but I much preferred to pursue my original Basque goals, because very few people were doing it. So I transferred to UNR to do the PhD in Basque studies, which had just been instituted. I really like Nevada, and that was another reason for coming here. In Nebraska the weather is not very good. It's hot and humid in the summer and cold and humid in the winter. But in Nevada the weather is much better, and besides, there are Basques around here.

I came to Reno, and at that time, Bill Douglass, Jon Bilbao, Gorka Aulestia, and Linda White were here. Linda was just a student, but soon she began working with the dictionary. There were other people here ahead of me, like Yon Oñatibia and Eloy Placer, but I didn't know them. Marcelino Ugalde was also at UNR as a student. I know he took Basque or Euskara classes from Bilbao, even though he didn't speak the language. When I came to UNR, I took over those classes. They paid me for teaching the class, so it was my only job while I was doing my PhD.

The Basque PhD program was interdepartmental. It was not only Basque Studies, but also the History, Foreign Languages, and Anthropology departments. We were a small part of all those departments. In my mind, Basque Studies was the biggest thing in the world, but very few people knew that it existed, and I couldn't believe it. [laughter] I would ask students, and they would say, "Basque Studies? What's that?" They didn't publicize it, because it was a research center. They also published books, but very few students around here read them.

Bill Douglass was my supervisor, and Judy Whitenack, Frank Hartigan, James Tigner, and Guillermo Porras Muñoz, from Mexico City, were on my PhD committee. The PhD took me three years. Bilbao was still in Reno, so I was most interested in his research expertise, and I took history classes from him because

I was a historian. He was born in Puerto Rico, and he had published books on Basques in America. But by the time I got my PhD, Bilbao wasn't here anymore, and he wasn't a member of my PhD committee. For that I relied on Porras. I also took one class from Douglass early on, the first one. Everybody, including Gorka and myself, were taking those classes from the Basque program, and I don't know if there was anybody else taking them. Then, of course, I took the classes that I needed from Frank Hartigan and James Tigner.

Since the Basque PhD program was a tutorial program, we were doing a lot of the work on our own. For example, I tried to learn fifteenth and sixteenth-century handwriting, and that was pretty difficult. The program bought me a big book that was published in Barcelona. I was actually able to read a few things. Some of those guys had very clear handwriting, and others abbreviated everything.

My PhD subject was Juan Zumarraga, first bishop of Mexico City during the sixteenth century. Now, I'm working on a manuscript for publication, which is almost ready. Zumarraga is probably the most important Basque person in America, without a doubt. I can't say Simón Bolívar was Basque, just because his grandfather was from Bizkaia. He knew about his Basque ancestry, but it's not the same. He lost a lot of the culture when his parents were born in America.

Very few people know Zumarraga. He was a Franciscan from Durango who wrote in Basque. So you know what we think today about those old friars? They were just friars. But Zumarraga was another animal, a different character. He had economic views of the colonies that were far ahead of anything in Europe at that time. He wrote and printed the first books in America, and he was instrumental in putting together the first university in America, ninety years ahead of the first university in the U.S. Since in Nevada we call Pedro Altube the "father of the Basques," in Mexico, without a doubt, Zumarraga was the patriarch of the Basques. He was a very powerful person, and not just because he was a bishop. He had a very particular relationship with the Hispanic Emperor, Charles V, who died before Zumarraga in 1548, and then Phillip II took over, and supposedly Phillip II used to laugh about Zumarraga's letters, because his Castilian was so poor.

My external advisor, Guillermo Porras, knew sixteenth-century Mexico City the best, so I was very lucky to work with



Participants at the Second International Conference, The Basques in the Mexican Regions, 16th-20th Centuries, 1995. Participants include Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe, front row, second from left.

him. I remember when I sat with the committee to defend my thesis, the first question Porras asked me was, "When Zumarraga came for the first time to Mexico and he was walking down the road from Puebla, the highlands, and he saw the big City of Mexico, what do you think he was thinking?"

I said, "I have no idea! What was he thinking? You tell me!" He knew so much history that he felt comfortable asking me that question, but I wasn't quite up to it. [laughter]

After working on Zumarraga, and about the time I finished my PhD, I rediscovered the Basque tree carvings. If anything, my legacy would be the study of those tree carvings, which I've been recording for seventeen years. When I came to the U.S., I discovered that the Basques have been in this country for 150 years, and very little research had been done, and very little had been published, especially about shepherders.

The study of tree carvings is not archaeology, even though the U.S. Forest Service and BLM [Bureau of Land Management] archaeologists and historians thought that it was archaeology. It took me years to convince them that it was history. It just wasn't written on a piece of paper; it was written on trees. It's just cultural

history, ethnohistory. Tree carvings are a little bit like Zumarraga. Even though there are so many of them, and even though Zumarraga did so many things, the Basque people, especially, don't know beans about him. They know more about Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier than about Zumarraga. Sure, Loyola, through the Jesuits, did a lot and left a legacy, too, but single-handedly Zumarraga did a lot more to influence Mexican culture.

Basque tree carvings are in about ten states in the American West, so it's huge, and yet, very few people know much about them. I think it's a Basque curse. We do a lot, but it's not known. It was James Lockart, a Latin American historian, who twenty years ago said that the Basques did in America essential tasks for the Hispanic empire, but they haven't gotten credit for it. He hit it right on the nail! That has happened left and right. Maybe it's the Basque curse, or maybe it's what we should be known for.

I lived ten miles north of the UNR campus, and I was looking out the window at the aspens. In the fall they become brilliant yellow, gold, red. I told my kids and my wife, "Let's go for a hike." So we went into the grove, which was very close to where we lived, and that was the rediscovery of the tree carvings, because twenty, twenty-one years before that I had already seen the carvings in Elko, where I lived for three years. I was actually in a sheep camp, and I asked the herders, "What's all this?"

"Bah! You know, it's just to kill time, nothing."

This is also very typical Basque. They don't give any importance to what they do, which ties very well with what I said earlier. So the Basques knew that all the herders carved their names and all the stories on trees but didn't seem to appreciate it. They never talked about them. I had to ask them over and over and over.

However, after twenty years, I think the Basques are starting to appreciate the old herders. They go back to their sheep ranges where they herded sheep, and they take a look at these aspens, trying to find their names in there. But back then I don't think a lot of people appreciated the tree carvings.

For example, the history of the Peruvian and Chilean sheepherders should be recorded now, because they're the ones doing that job now. But what's going to happen is that someone will come around twenty years from now, and he or she will start recording it, digging into it. Same thing happened to the Basques. Douglass and Bilbao wrote *Amerikanuak*, and there's a

lot of sheep history there, and there's also a mention of tree carvings, and even photographs. But, Douglass and Bilbao didn't realize what was on these trees and how much information was on them, because the Basques did not volunteer any information. Also, I don't know how much they went into the mountains, to the sheep camps themselves, and how many trees they saw.

One day I went to Elko to give a presentation, and only one Basque herder showed up, and I asked him, "Why didn't the Basque sheepherders come?" At the time, I knew almost every one of them in Elko.

"Oh, forget it! They want to forget about those years. They don't care. They know too much about those things."

So that's what we were facing when trying to record a history of Basque sheepherders. They want to forget about those years.

Whenever I saw something written in Basque on a tree, for me it was a very special tree, because none of these herders ever went to school to learn how to read or write Basque. Last year when I did research in the Bridgeport area on the U.S. Marine base, I found a lot of carvings in Basque, so I was very gratified with all of the findings. For me it is a highlight when I see something that has been carved a long time ago.

Those who carved in Basque did so because that's the only thing they had inside. They hardly spoke any Spanish, especially the ones from Iparralde, and they knew very little French. So no wonder the people from Iparralde carved most in Basque, and people from Bizkaia would carve "*Gora Euskadi* [long live the Basque Country]!" and things like that, but not much more. Although a couple of days ago I was up in Susanville, and there was a fellow by the name Mallea who carved, "*Agur bildotxa ekarrik* [so bring here the lambs]." [laughter] So there were a few of those, too.

Peruvian, Chilean, and Mexican sheepherders keep carving trees because they have seen the Basque ones, and it has become a tradition for them, too. They have the time and the trees. So it's a nice thing. In fact, they do much more than the Basques when it comes to politics, because they also are more cultured. They've gone to school, and a lot of these people are from the cities, whereas a lot of Basques hardly knew how to write—not all of them, because there's also Latin written on trees! So, some of those guys knew not only Spanish, Basque, French, and English, but also Latin.



"Whenever I saw something written in Basque on a tree, for me it was a very special tree." Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe reads the inscriptions made on an aspen tree deposited at the Basque Library, 1990.

The Peruvians carve, for example, more, "*Viva Peru* [long live Peru]," and "I'm from Peru," and things like that, than the Basques did. The Basques, a lot of them, simply put their first name, last name, and the date, and that's your typical carving. That was enough for them.

At the same time, for the last four years or so, I have intensively focused on Basque oral literature in the U.S., the *bertsolariak* [Basque verse improvisers]. In my mind, academically, culturally, and historically speaking, *bertsolaritza* in this country do not compare with tree carvings in any shape or form. We only have four or five *bertsolari* poets who can improvise and sing. What happened was that nobody else was studying this form of art, and that's exactly how I started with the tree carvings, too, because nobody else was studying it. I saw what was at stake, and I saw that these trees were going down and that we'd already lost 70 percent of them. Same thing is happening with the

bertsuak [Basque verses] and the Basque oral poetry in the U.S. Again, there were not very many people who knew about it.

I discovered the camcorder in 1988 or 1989, and the people at the SHPO (Nevada's State Historic Preservation Office) in Carson City told me, "Don't use it, because the video doesn't last any time, and if you do so, try to use black and white film." But then I realized that for tree carvings, the camcorder was the tool, so I bought a camcorder—actually, the first one was bought by the state of Nevada for my research, and I think it should be somewhere around the Basque Studies office. It was an old thing. So I have used the video recorder at the Basque picnics going back fifteen years or more. Whenever the *bertsolaris* were performing, I would tape everything.

Then one day I looked at these materials, and I thought, I'm going to make a small publication, maybe 100 pages. At first I thought I would do it only in Basque, but then I felt, "Who is going to read this? People who speak Basque don't read." Then I said, "OK. I'm going to make it bilingual." Then the word got around, and I started getting *bertso paperak* or verses written on papers and information from all over the place, most of them from California. What I thought was going to be 50 or 100 pages turned out to be much bigger. In fact, *Shooting from the Lip* was published in 2003 by the North American Basque Organizations (NABO), and it has over 400 pages. I already have another manuscript of written *bertso paperak* almost ready to go to press, which is about *bertsolari* poets who did not improvise but wrote on paper.

I wonder how many Basques have bought the book, because NABO hasn't done any publicity, and they just sit in a warehouse. The organization that has done more than anybody else to have this Basque *bertsolaritza* known in America is the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko and the Western Folklife Center.

Through the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the *bertsolariak*, John Curuchet, Jesus Arriada, Jesus Goñi, and Martin Goikoetxea, went to Washington, D.C., a couple of years ago, where they got the highest national Folk Art Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. (Since then Arriada retired, so we have another man, Graxian Alfaro.) In May of 2006, they went to the United Nations, and maybe in another year or so we may go finally to the Basque Country to have a little competition with *bertsolaris* from there, because the Basques in the Basque Country now know only one kind of *bertsolaritza*.

These guys in America are the old type and sing about their lives. They don't sing about philosophical matters or politics or current issues like they do in the Basque Country, at least not in championships or *txapelketak*. Well, they do a little bit, but they sing more about what they know. Maybe we will go to the Basque Country one day soon.

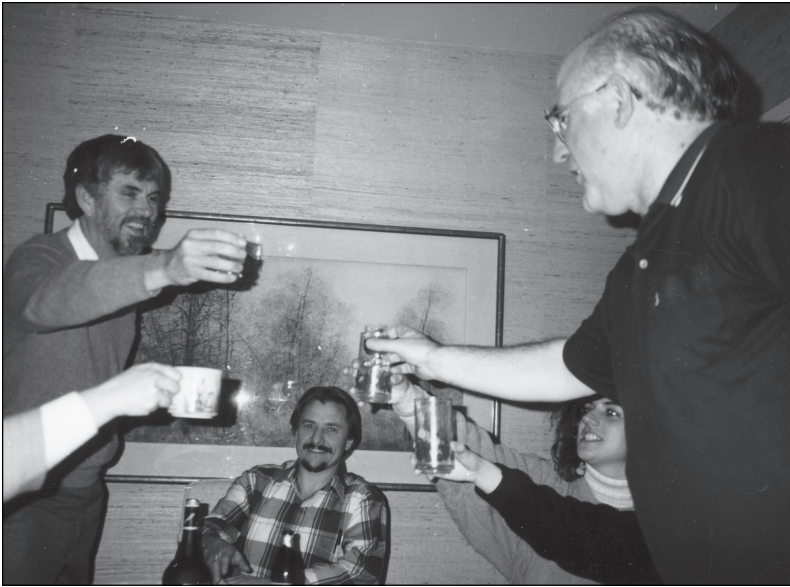
The Basque language and Basque studies

When I came to this country, for some reason, I did let go a lot of other previous research and interests of mine that were Euskara, politics, too, and life in the Basque Country under Franco. I'm not trying to criticize anybody, but in my mind Euskara and anything to do with the Basques is the same thing. In other words, if you don't use your language to study the culture, then the results are going to be a little bit skewed.

In that sense, Gorka Aulestia studied the language and the *bertsolaritza* [the art of improvising verses] phenomenon. However, he wrote in Spanish. So my little share or my little contribution on Basque studies would be my research on *bertsolaritza*, but I'm not taking anything from Gorka, because he also published about it. Until I came to the U.S., I didn't write one single thing in anything but Basque, and here, of course, I have to use the English language. So I had to leave aside the Basque language more than I liked to.

The use of the English language to promote Basque studies is a reality. What can you do? You publish a book in Basque, and how many are going to read it? Probably we're not just talking about now. This is the history of the Basque Country going back 2,000 years or more. The reason why officials in the Basque Country did not use their language—even when they spoke Basque and wrote instead in Latin or Castilian or Occitan, in a bigger language, a language that was spoken by and understood and read by more people—was that more people would know about what they wrote or what message they wanted to convey. It hasn't changed.

I lived with Euskara, and to me there is no other way. But I think people who are in Basque studies should know the language—that would be the minimum that I would ask from everybody—and use it sometimes, you know? Bill Douglass



Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe (center) at a Basque Studies function. On Joxe's left is Bill Douglass, and on the right are Nere Lete and Gorka Aulestia.

learned to speak Basque, and the people were amazed how well he spoke Bizkaian Basque, but then he didn't use it, and I guess he didn't feel like he learned enough to write in Basque, although he has written something in Basque, so he used Spanish instead. Bill also spoke Spanish with Gorka, not me, because my Spanish was kind of poor. I didn't know any Spanish until I went to school, and then in Oñati we always spoke Basque. So I always kept my Basque *aldean* [within me]. And Linda, being an American and all, she learned Basque fast, taught it and translated it. So there have been some great things done in the program.

Gorka and I always spoke Basque, but nobody else did, and that hasn't changed in all these years in Basque Studies. So if there's one thing that I miss in the Basque Studies Program it is the use of the Basque language as a vehicle. Someone, say, from America who is interested in the Basques and doesn't speak the language, but speaks Spanish or French and goes to the Basque Country to do research on the Basque culture, would obviously use Spanish or French to do it. So then he comes back to write a

master's or a PhD or whatever, and he uses dozens and dozens of terms, all of them in Castilian or French like *bacalao la Vizcaína* [Bizkaian cod] or *caserío* [farmstead].

The reason is that he used Spanish or French to communicate with his research participants, so they gave him information back in the same language. They will learn either French or Castilian names rather than Basque names, because the interview was done in those languages. Then some Americans who read his published research are going to conclude that, "OK. So in Basque, 'farm' is *caserío*." So at the beginning of the book or the publication of these researchers, they should warn the readers about the pitfalls, but they don't. So we have this huge confusion, and a lot of people still think that Basque is a combination of Spanish, French, Portuguese, even though it's a very different language. It's been the curse of Basque culture.

The Basque program in Reno has gotten a lot of mileage, because they were—as the saying goes—in the right place at the right time. In Argentina, they published books much earlier than Basque Studies here, but somehow they haven't gotten the publicity, the name, and recognition, even though there were many more Basques in Argentina. A lot of those who went to Argentina—and those who ended up after the Spanish Civil War in Venezuela or in Nicaragua where there was another center of Basque learning and some books were published—were educated people. But here, a lot of it happened because Paul Laxalt was governor of Nevada and a U.S. senator, and his brother, Bob, was a well-known writer and founder of the University Press, and also because of Bill Douglass and Jon Bilbao.

Bob Laxalt was a very good friend of mine. He was like a two-pronged enterprise—one was the Basque Studies Program, the other was his books, his personal writings. His books were widely read, and that's how the Basque community became known in the West, or at least in Nevada. Bob initially had a lot to do with Basque Studies, but after a while, when Bill Douglass settled in Reno, then Bill pretty much ran things on his own.

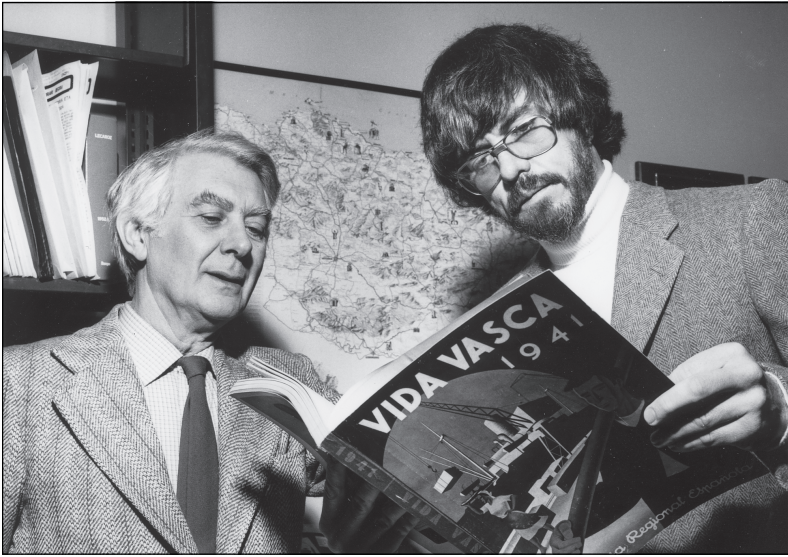
Bob's first book was about his father, about sheepherders. There were a few books already written about sheepherders, but nothing with the insight that Laxalt had on his father and how he lived, and then he linked it a little bit to the old country. But Bob didn't speak the language, so his connections to the old country, to his father and mother, were in a way broken. At home,

they spoke English, I guess, and maybe they learned some French. I don't know if any of his books mention the language that his mother and his father spoke between them. I'm sure they spoke in Basque. She was running a hotel or little *ostatu*, so she needed English, and I'm sure that she told their children, "Now, you speak English. Learn the language." I never met his mother or father, but the father was a real Basque.

Jon Bilbao's legacy is tremendous. Bilbao was a guy who spent—I'm not going to say every night—day after day at the library, when everybody else went home, because he lived alone and didn't have family in Reno. He would just read and read and take notes. That's how he built a huge bibliography. He was just a dedicated man. He also went to the local Basque hangouts quite a bit and talked to the Basques. It was a shame that he didn't know the language. He could have had much more insight into the Basque culture if he did speak it. He knew the history and the culture, and he probably read everything that was published on the Basques.

Bill Douglass himself told me that when he was a student, he started working in construction, and there he met the first Basques, and he thought they were Italians. So Bill didn't know anything about Basques initially. But he has been the man for all these years. By that I mean he was the head, the coordinator, and he never shied away from work. His publications are incredible. In another sense, Bilbao was also the man. I think Bill relied a lot on him. So what Bill contributed to Basque Studies is tremendous, but it was that happy coincidence of Bill Douglass, Jon Bilbao, and the Laxalts, and the fact that there were a lot of Basque people back then in Reno.

In the 1960s there were lots and lots of Basques, but in the 1970s Basque migration to the U.S. started to wane, and then in the 1980s, maybe there was a trickle, and that was it. A lot of those who came in the 1940s and 1950s stayed, and those who came in the 1960s, it was so-so, because things were getting better in the Basque Country. The dollar against the *peseta* and the franc was not as great an incentive as it was before. A lot of the 1960s people from Bizkaia, who ended up, for example, in Boise, Elko, or Winnemucca, stayed. But after the 1960s, fewer and fewer came, and I think a lot of them just went back after the official three-year contract, because they couldn't get the papers. Unless you got a green card to work, you had to go back. It's still the



"He was the head, the coordinator, and he never shied away from work. His publications are incredible. But in another sense, Bilbao was also the man." Jon Bilbao and Bill Douglass looking at a magazine at the Basque Library, late 1980s.

same thing with the Peruvians. Anyway, it's hard to say how many stayed and how many did not, because we don't really have numbers. Nobody has done a study to, say, take 100 Basques to see what happened to them—how many stayed and how many left.

After I graduated in 1988, I was employed at Basque Studies for two years. When Joseba Zulaika came, I left, and I've been working at TMCC (Truckee Meadows Community College) ever since. I've been away from the Basque program for a few years, because I didn't have the time to get involved, and slowly I've been forgetting that this place exists almost. [laughter]

I am always very happy to read all the books that come out of the program. I think a big change was when the program became more involved with the Basque government, but I don't know how much they are involved now. For example, in 1989 or 1990, the Basque government gave me huge grants to work on Zumarraga and on the tree carvings. That was when the program and the government began to work together. That would be one

development that has produced considerable fruit. I think it was Zulaika who got into that more than Bill Douglass, because, obviously, he is from the Basque Country. Then more recently, when Zulaika became the director, a lot of things changed. I think one day Bill said that it was like a brand-new Basque Center.

JOSEBA ZULAIKA

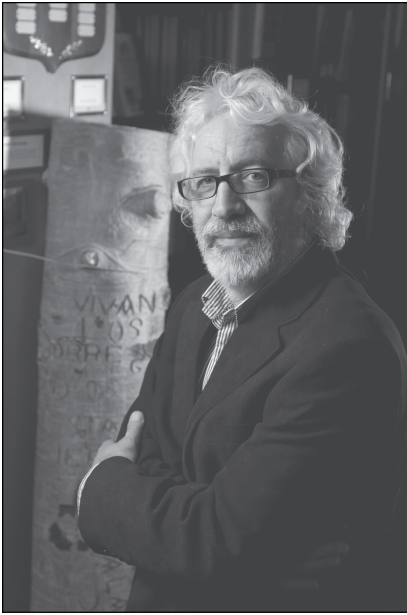
Joseba Zulaika was born in 1948 in Itziar, in the Basque province of Gipuzkoa. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy at the University of Deusto, Bilbao, in 1975. Two years later, he obtained an MA degree in social anthropology at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, earning a PhD in cultural anthropology from Princeton University in 1982.

Throughout his career, Joseba has conducted extensive fieldwork in various areas, such as with deep-sea fishermen, farmers, political violence, and the urban regeneration of Bilbao. He has authored and edited over twenty-five books and nearly one hundred articles, including book chapters. He has also delivered over one hundred papers at national and international conferences.

Joseba has been affiliated with Basque Studies for twenty-five years and was its director from 2000 through 2005. He is currently a professor at the Center for Basque Studies.

Total peace: first visits to Reno

I got my bachelor's degree in philosophy in the fall of 1975 at Deusto, and I wanted to do anthropology, but there was no



Joseba Zulaika, 2007

anthropology in Spain at the time. I wanted to go to an Anglo-Saxon country, so I went to London, and there I found out that Canada was an excellent place to get a scholarship. In 1975 I got a scholarship to study at the Memorial University of St. John's, Newfoundland, where they were interested in the Basques because of their fishing and maritime tradition. They admitted me for a master's, wondering, "Who is this guy?" So that's where I ended up, and I loved it there. They were great people, a great department, and that's where I did my first ethnographic work on deep-sea Galician and

Basque fishermen, the *bacaladeros* [cod fishermen]. The thesis was then published as a book called *Terranova*.

I don't know who told me about it first, but I knew when I was in Canada that there was a Basque Studies Program and a library in Reno. Actually, in 1976, I applied to come to Reno to do a thesis on Basque mythology, and I talked to Virginia Jacobsen on the phone. I told her I was interested in a library research study, and a few weeks later I got the reply saying that there was no grant that I could use, so I decided to stay in Canada.

After getting a master's, my mentor at Memorial University, Robert Park, applied for me to Princeton University, and I got accepted. At Princeton my mentors were James Fernandez and Hildreth Geertz. I felt that it was a jackpot for me. So in 1977, I went to Princeton to do my PhD, and after I did my grad work there and my fieldwork in the Basque Country, I went to Reno in the fall of 1980, and I stayed there for three months. I finished my dissertation on Basque political violence in the summer of 1982, and I went back to Reno for an entire year. So that's how I began my relationship with the Basque Studies Program.

In the summer of 1983, I went to the Basque Country, and I began teaching as an associate professor at the University of the Basque Country, in Zorroaga, Donostia-San Sebastián. I spent the summers of 1984 and 1985 in Reno. In 1985 I received a three-year grant from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation of New York, and with that I quit teaching at the University of the Basque Country, and I continued my own research. Then, once again, I went back to Reno in 1987, and I stayed there for nine months.

During my first visit to Reno, I met Bill Douglass and Jon Bilbao. For three months I used the library for my dissertation, and I have strong memories about Jon, who was the librarian. I became very good friends with him. We would work seven days a week, Sundays included, and we would spend most of the day at the library. In the afternoons we would take a coffee, and it was the only time of the week in which he would engage in conversation about anything with me. Bill Douglass and Jill Berner were here, and by then, maybe, Linda also. When I came back for an entire year in 1982, I used that office where the Basque Librarian is now. It had a window, too, and I just loved it. I had a great time. I had total freedom to do my writing and nothing else. Each time that I went back to Reno, I always enjoyed it. It was for me a place where I could entirely devote myself to writing and reading. I was quite happy in Reno.

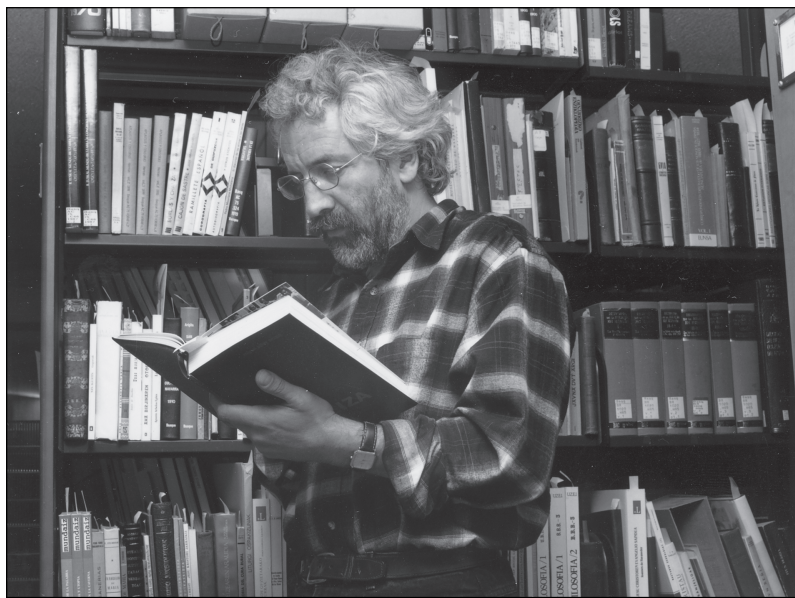
My first impression was that the Basque Library was a great resource. I'm an anthropologist, so anything that I needed on Basque traditional culture was here: Basque history, politics, art, all the works by Julio Caro Baroja, Jose Miguel de Barandiaran, and all the anthropologists. During my year in 1982, 1983, I worked mostly on issues of aesthetics, and Jon Bilbao gave me invaluable help in getting all the articles on aesthetics by Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza, so I spent a lot of my time working on that.

Then I had in the main library the works of all the foremost anthropologists, which I also used a lot. I had an ideal combination of the basic literature on Basque issues and an overall good library on the current contemporary disciplines. So my impression was a combination of having an enormous resource and total peace. It seemed I had the luxury of having the whole library just for me. There were visitors, but nothing

much. I was just by myself, and nobody bothered me in anything. Jon would always help me find any book. It was an ideal situation, and I felt it was so quiet. It was a jewel for me and a treasure that the world didn't know about. I always felt really, really fortunate to be here. I also liked Reno's ambience of intense light, the mountains, the desert, and the laid-back style. I loved it all.

Gorka Aulestia finished working on his dictionary and left in 1989, and that's when UNR opened up a new position in the Basque Studies Program, although Gorka didn't have the position of Basque scholar. They only got one candidate, so they opened it again for 1990. I decided to apply, and I don't know how many candidates there were—half a dozen or so—and I was lucky to get the nomination. So I was hired as a Basque scholar in 1990 until now.

I think it was the first time, probably, that they opened a search for a Basque position. The administration must have accepted the need for a Basque scholar at the program. Since we are a statewide program, Bill must have gotten an expansion of his statewide monies to create this position, or maybe, while creating the dictionary, he got expansion of all the funding. I



Joseba Zulaika reading a book at the Basque Library, 1990.

don't really know those details. My contract was a tenure-track contract, so every year we renewed it. After four years I got tenure, and after another five years or so, I got full professor.

At that time, in 1990, Bill was the coordinator, as he had been from the very beginning, and Linda was his assistant coordinator. Then we had Jill and Joan Brick in the office.

I came to Reno with my wife, Goretti, and daughter, Garazi, who was a year and a half old in 1990. Then my son, Joannes, was born in 1993. Garazi may be a good reason why I'm here, because she brought me down to reality. I thought I didn't need to work anymore, because I got the three-year grant, which was just incredible for me at that time. [laughter] That was why I had quit teaching in Zorroaga. But now I had to support a wife and a child. So that was the reason I thought I needed a job.

I told my wife, "Let's go for ten years, and then we'll see." And now fifteen years have gone by, but I keep telling my wife another ten years. She remembers the original timetable, and it is one of those topics that I try very hard not to bring up, because it might be a problem. [laughter] Now the children go to school here, they have their friends, and here we are. We go back to the Basque Country regularly, and we are very happy with this arrangement.

I did my studies in Canada and in this country, and I knew what the University of the Basque Country in San Sebastián was like—I didn't feel like going back to teaching there. I was not happy in San Sebastián while I was teaching in Zorroaga. That was why I quit and I asked for the Guggenheim grant. I could have had pretty much the same job in San Sebastián, but I much preferred Reno to San Sebastián for my work because of my experience as a researcher-writer. Reno had been a blessing for me. I had *all* the time in the world to read and write, and no entertainments from that side of the world, no diversions of any sort, and I just loved that. So I feel much happier here as a writer than over there where everything was far more factionalized, problematic. So luckily—very, very luckily—my wife did not object to coming to the States, and when we came, we knew that we were coming for a long stay.

Back to basics: the Nevada Legislature and the advisory board

Before I became the director of the Center for Basque Studies, I did nothing but research and writing. I was the happiest scholar

in the world just doing that. I didn't even know who the dean of the college was, and I never took part in any committee. Then when Bill retired in 1999, by default I had to be the director, because I was the only other tenured faculty. I had to fill the shoes of Bill Douglass, and that's what I've tried to do for six years. It was not easy, but we survived, and I think we have even improved in some areas.

I had never been in management before, so I went back to basics. "Let's create a research center, let's publish, and let's get to the basic reference-book work." So we got a good grant, which I helped write for a database, and the center was the initial impulse behind it. Let us get to basics in just teaching and connecting with the students.

I took Bill's history of thirty-three years, in which the center had become internationally known as a center of excellence in Basque studies, and I expanded into fundraising, into institutional help from Basque homeland institutions, into new positions, into publications, and into a new curriculum. I couldn't have done that without the history of the center, so I have been pretty much totally on the shoulders of what Bill did.

The Basque Studies Program became the Center for Basque Studies in 1999. In that year we had an external review process, which was carried out by Begoña Aretxaga from Harvard University, Jacqueline "Jacquie" Urla from the University of Massachusetts, and Robert Clark from George Mason University. They did an excellent job in seeing the strength and weaknesses of the program, and they issued a series of recommendations that were taken very seriously by us and by the dean at the time. Their view was that Basque Studies was undervalued within UNR, and that the program had a much bigger potential because of its uniqueness and its own history of excellence.

One of their recommendations was to obtain two new positions. So, during my directorship, the Basque Studies faculty pretty much doubled. When I became director, Bill was in a half-time position; Linda and I each had a full-time position. Now we have five positions plus a sixth *de facto* position, which is the William Douglass Distinguished Scholar.

We are a statewide program, and every biennium there is the opportunity to ask for more funding or more positions or whatever. In previous biennia, we had asked the Nevada Legislature for more, but it never resulted in anything. In 2000,



Goio Monreal (right), the first William A. Douglass Distinguished Scholar Award recipient, with Bill Douglass, November 2005.

the year I took over as director, initially we were told that there weren't going to be any new positions available. Yet, the last minute, because I insisted on it, the university allowed us to ask for new positions and expansion of the program, assuming that it was again pie-in-the-sky. In the fall of 2000, we found out that for the first time we were on the list of priorities for funding from the legislature. We were at the bottom, but we were there with our request for two new positions, and we were surprised.

How did we get there? We never really figured out how, but my own feeling was that Bob Mead [the dean] did all he could to support us because of this favorable review program stating that we would have a bigger potential if properly supported. Joe Crowley had really liked this program, too. Through thirty-some years of history by then, he couldn't do much for Basque Studies, because this was dependent on the statewide program. It was his parting gift to the center and to Bill. Both Joe and Bill were retiring at the same time. This is my speculation, but that is what I felt after I asked over and over, "How did it get on this list?" Bob Mead always told me that he thought Joe had something to do with it, but Joe himself would never tell you this.

I had a meeting with Bob Mead and Bob Dickens to talk about what we should do now that we were on this priority list. (Dickens is the UNR lawyer who takes part in all of the negotiations between the university and the legislature.) I remember getting there and Bob Dickens looking squarely at me, and the first thing he said was, "Well, it is my job to tell you that being on this list doesn't mean much, that it is very remote that you are going to get anything from this."

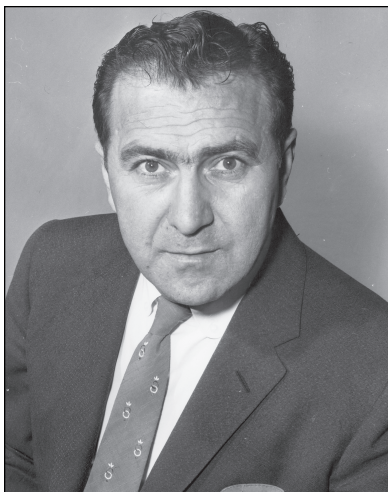
I said, "OK, but let's find out what we have to do." We began getting information and mobilizing the recently created center's advisory board as to how we should go about making the possibility real. It is here that the advisory board became a decisive tool for us. It became a godsend for the center in terms of fundraising and influence in the Nevada community and in the university community. We had our first advisory board meeting in late January of 2001, and Joe Crowley and Bob Mead were at that meeting. After the meeting, before dinner, John Echeverria, a member of the board and later on its chair, had a phone call at home from William "Bill" Raggio telling him that they were going to honor his father, Pete Echeverria, in the legislature. Raggio asked John to take part in the event.

Bill Raggio and Pete Echeverria, although from different political parties, were close friends, and Raggio had entered politics working with Echeverria. Pete had also been influential in Nevada politics, and John was in the same law firm as Raggio. There were those kinds of associations.

This was all totally new for us. Back then I knew nothing about Basques in Nevada politics, but there was a tradition, and the Laxalt family was the main name when Paul Laxalt was governor and senator. So there was then some influence from the Basque community through that connection.

Suddenly, we found ourselves in a very strong position. Soon we would learn that Bill Raggio was the guy that "cut the cod [has the last word]," as we'll say, and he was the decisive legislator in getting these two positions funded. So the fact that Bill Raggio called John was a significant moment for us. We commented on this, and when John called Bill Raggio back, the first thing Raggio said was, "John, there is no money, so there's no point."

John came to tell us, "Raggio says there is no money, but he has asked me to go see him." After waiting a couple of months, we had a meeting with Bill Raggio in April.



"Bill Raggio and Pete Echeverria, although from different political parties, were close friends . . . Pete had also been influential in Nevada politics." Pete Echeverria, June 1959.

This possibility of a visit kept our hopes alive. Obviously, we mobilized Joe Crowley and Bill Douglass as the well-known director of the Center for Basque Studies, whose history everybody knew in the legislature, and Michonne Ascuaga, who was also in our advisory board. We also mobilized Pete Ernaut, who then mobilized somebody important in the legislature. Pete Ernaut was a very influential lobbyist who ran Kenny Guinn's election campaign for governor and was Governor Guinn's first chief of staff. So he's well connected, and he's willing to use his influence to help Basque Studies because he feels Basque.

One morning, we were all in this meeting with Bill Raggio, and this was the time when the legislature was approving bills, and it was a hectic time in which legislators have just a few minutes to spare. So we got there, and Pete explained to him, "Bob Laxalt died last year, and we need to keep the tradition of these Basque studies alive. In fact, the Center has lost a position. The librarian used to be part of the Basque Studies Program, and we gave the librarian position to the library, so actually, the program has lost a member in the last ten years or so."

So Pete made our demand that we needed to recover that position, plus one more, according to what the external reviewers had recommended. Then Bill Douglass started saying something about the center, and Bill Raggio just cut him off, "I know all about the center. You don't have to tell me anything about it."

Then Joe Crowley spoke in supporting the center's work, and Bill Raggio simply said, "After the Italian studies"—he's of Italian descent—"Basque Studies will be my next priority. We'll see what we can do."



"So [Pete's] well connected, and he's willing to use his influence to help Basque Studies because he feels Basque." Basque Parliament officials visiting Carson City, Nevada, July 1999. Standing, left to right: Carmelo Urza, Ana Ansa, Juan Mari Atutxa, Kate Camino, Koldo Ordozgoiti, Benan Oregi, and Pete Ernaut. Seated: Governor Kenny Guinn.

The next thing we knew, after an anxious wait of several weeks, was that we *got* the two new positions. You can imagine that moment of total exhilaration. For a research center with three faculty members, moving to five faculty members was a major step in its history. It practically doubled our faculty. We now have five full-time faculty devoted to research and to the creation of texts and the creation of networks. I think we can be a very vital group in reviving Basque studies and in expanding it.

The idea of the advisory board came partly out of the dynamic of the center, partly by chance. What forced this was that when Bill retired, Bob Mead called me to say that the Center for Basque Studies should be a site for an endowed chair under the name of Bill Douglass.

I ask him, "So what does that mean? How much do you need for that?"

"Two million dollars."

I ask him, "So, who's going to raise that money?"

"Well, you."

The College of Arts and Science, at the time, had a development officer who could help us. So in the spring of 2000 I started talking with the dean about what we should do to raise that kind of money. The woman in charge of development resigned that year, and there was somebody new who did not have much experience, and it became very obvious that we would have to raise the money or nobody else would. Being inexperienced as I was, I thought that the dean was telling me this for real, that I had to raise this money. I took it seriously, and I started wondering, "How the hell are we going to raise this? This is just impossible."

After we talked to several people, there was the idea of creating an advisory board. I said, "Well, I've done my part, and if it doesn't come out, well, it won't be my fault." The dean himself was in favor of the advisory board, but not everyone thought it was a good idea. I had the good fortune in this process of meeting with Cheryl Miglioretto, whose father is Italian and whose mother is Basque.

Cheryl had just retired from her job as director of the Nevada Arts Council with a lot of experience in organizing things. I was going to Bilbao the summer of 2000, and she decided to accompany me on that trip to the Basque Country, and that was her first time there. She took advantage of my going there, and in this process we had plenty of time to discuss the advisory board. She became my ally and my advisor, and we started collaborating on how this could be done. One initial idea was that Bill should be on the board, because he had all the historical authority behind this. I went to talk to him, and, initially, he was ambivalent, because the idea of the board was to raise money for a William Douglass Endowed Chair. Bill wouldn't participate at all in the advisory board if its purpose was to raise money for that. That was his condition.

So we left that aside, and slowly we realized that the advisory board had its own intrinsic value for us. Bill and Carmelo Urza, both, overcame their initial doubts. I was totally inexperienced in any of this, so they had plenty of things to have doubts about. When they began supporting the idea, the board began to take shape.

That summer Pete Echeverria died, and we went to the funeral, and there for the first time I heard John giving a eulogy



"She became my ally and my advisor, and we started collaborating on how this could be done." Joseba Zulaika and Cheryl Miglioretto Ansotegui during the first meeting of the Center for Basque Studies Advisory Board, January 2001.

of his father. I met John Echeverria, and Nikki Laxalt told us that he was a very powerful lawyer in San Francisco. This advisory board was all I had on my mind at the time, and I thought that he could be a good member of the Basque board.

I consulted in everything with Cheryl, Bill, and Carmelo, and it was Christmas when we started inviting two dozen people, including John, to become members on the board. John didn't even reply to the first invitation. I had heard from Kate Camino that she knew Theresa, John's sister, and after I didn't get any reply from John, I said to Kate, "Why don't you ask her why John hasn't replied?"

Kate called Theresa, and Theresa told John, "They invited you. You have never replied."

"Well, let them send me that again." John said.

So, I sent him a second letter, and John showed up as soon as he got it. It was already January, and there was a whole bunch of other people invited, but they either replied or refused to come.

Finally, we got on the board people like Michonne Ascuaga. I just thought that it would be quite, quite difficult to have Michonne on our advisory board, but I said, "Let's invite her." I don't know why, but I thought that I should go to her with Joe Crowley. So in my naïveté I had the nerve to tell Joe Crowley that we needed somebody like Michonne for our advisory board.

"OK. Let's go, great," was Joe's instant reply. So we met Michonne, and her father, John Ascuaga. We brought the pictures of the first Western Basque Festival of June 1959. He was all excited, and Michonne was interested and listened to us. We were establishing a very powerful advisory board, and we were very excited about it. We had Pete Cenarrusa, which meant a lot to us because of what he means for the Basque community here. Mike Bidart also came, and he is very involved with Basque culture in California. We invited Josemari Basagoiti from Mexico, a great



The Western Basque Festival Committee, Reno-Sparks, June 1959. Front row, left to right,: John Ascuaga, Bob Laxalt, and Pete Echeverria. Back row: John Laxalt, Joe Micheo, Martin Esain, and Pete Supera.

guy who has been considered a big banking figure in Mexico. He was very much in love with Basque studies in cultural and global terms. He's been living in Mexico all his life. Joe Ansolabehere, a writer for Disney in Hollywood, also came to the first meeting.

We invited José Ramón Cengotitabengoa from Chicago and Emilia Doyaga from New York. They are both involved with the Society of Basque Studies in America. Emilia has never failed to show up for one of the meetings. We invited somebody representing NABO, and its president delegated John Yursa. From the academic world, we had Begoña Aretxaga, Jeri Echeverria (the provost of California State University-Fresno) Pello Salaburu (former president of the Basque Country University, whose contribution has been very significant), and also Bill Douglass and Carmelo Urza. The first Center for Basque Studies' Advisory Board meeting took place on January 31, 2001. Other members present at the meeting were Anita Anacabe-Franziosa and Felipe Muguerza, then the president of FEVA.

That's how we started, and then obviously John Echeverria took over the election, and he created the bylaws, always with the help of Bill Douglass. John has been the motor behind the advisory board. The goal of the advisory board, as the name says, is to advise the center. It's not to decide in any sense what the center should be doing academically. It helps the center in achieving its academic and financial goals. In that regard, fundraising is a key aspect of an advisory board, as well as connecting the center with the Basque-American community and with the Nevada Legislature, for example. It also provides the center with an area of influence, in front of the administration here and with institutions in the Basque Country.

Basque Americans have put up a significant amount of their own private monies, and they have given us influence in the legislature, influence at UNR with the president, and influence with the Basques. So the advisory board's impact on the center these last years has been enormous. The advisory board has raised over \$1 million as of 2004 for a quasi-endowment which brings about 5 percent interest. Its goal is to raise \$3,000,000 as part of the center's endowment fund. I don't know of any department in our college that has an advisory board that is helping them this significantly.

When I became the director, I talked to Bill Douglass about getting support from Basque public institutions. Since the Center



"[The board] helps the center in achieving its academic and financial goals."
 The first Center for Basque Studies Advisory Board meeting, January 2001.
 Left to right: Joe Crowley, Bill Douglass, Anita Anacabe-Franzioa, John Yursa,
 Emilia Doyaga, José Ramón Cengotitabengoa, and Joseba Zulaika.

for Basque Studies benefits Basque studies overall, and more concretely Basque universities and Basque scholars who come here and enjoy our hospitality in opening up the American system, I felt that Basque institutions, and not just Nevada, should support the center. John Echeverria and the advisory board gave the center an enormous influence with the political and financial institutions in the Basque Country. They helped us to achieve agreements with the Basque government and with Diputación de Bizkaia.

The people who run Independent Learning, a department in Extended Studies, didn't have sufficient personnel, and they asked if we could get a grant to put our courses online. So I went to the Basque institutions, always supported by Bill, to ask for help for online courses, essentially, publications, and conferences. With the occasion that Bill was given the Lagun Onari Award, we got a \$60,000 grant from the Basque Ministry of Education, which we turned into an annual agreement, not only with the Ministry of Education, but also with the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Foreign Affairs. They reacted very positively, because in this globalized context we have to collaborate in

making Basque culture and Basque studies internationally known. Consequently, we need to have books about Basque history and language in the libraries of the world, and for that you need money.

It's strategically important for Basque institutions to let themselves be known worldwide, and for this there have to be publications in English with a guarantee of quality, and we're providing that guarantee, and that's why they began supporting us. We do have the basic infrastructure as a center, but we don't have extra money to organize a conference, for example, or we don't have \$15,000 to spend in translating a novel or a scholarly book important enough to be published outside of the Basque Country in English. They are helping us strictly in this spirit of expansion of Basque studies, taking advantage of our infrastructure.

We are very, very small fish compared with the University of the Basque Country. They have thousands of professors that are reading in English, but they should be writing and producing in English, also. We have taken a role to make them aware that if they want to be academically sound, and if they don't want to be totally irrelevant, they have to publish in English. They need to open up to the Anglo and the global world more. They are not doing this yet, but I'm sure they are doing more and more every year. In that regard, we are an influence in that direction, and in our smallness, we might be leading the way in that.

We Basques have our autochthonous language, but we have done pretty well in going outside to the world for centuries and in letting the world know, in Spanish or in French or in other languages, who we are. Now the dominant lingua franca is openly English. There has been this Basque migration to the American continent, and I feel that the English language is one of the Basque languages, too, although it's not the autochthonous language. Same with Spanish, it's one of the Basque languages. I am Basque, and I talk English over here, and my son talks English. In a way it is my language, and my son is Basque, even if his language is English. I see English as part of our project.

I think the Basque institutions' consideration on funding us was influenced by the fact that Nevada within the overall picture of the center's finances, has provided us the positions, the library, and the basic infrastructure, which has been the lion's share throughout the history of Basque Studies. Then you add to that

other financial sources, such as the grants we have achieved—for example, the one to digitize the library in the early 1990s, and the one to create an electronic database, which we just completed in 2004. These are major grants that have become a very important part of Basque Studies. So that is the basic financial structure of how the center works. We have been lucky in raising this money in these last years and in mobilizing these new initiatives. So we are on a good path of expansion into interesting areas.

Regaining a presence: courses, conferences, and publications

The Basque Studies Program has been a research program since its beginning. It was not a teaching program. We had hardly any students. We rarely had public lectures or conferences, and the people who came here to do research would get into the library, and nobody else would see them. So we were absent, almost, from campus life.

The role of the Center for Basque Studies has been to provide a library: basic reference sources, basic bibliographic and etymological dictionaries, and basic information for research on the Basques. Also, our role has been leading potential PhD students and scholars in how to research Basque topics on a wide range of issues.

The research on the Basques has been possible through creating that basic infrastructure for research in order for anyone to use our library and to get the basic references on the Basques. In the past, this pushed Jon Bilbao to do his fourteen-volume bibliography. Now, we have added to that an electronic library database project and an improved library. We also produced textbooks for students and new publications on contemporary topics and conferences with the same spirit of expanding Basque studies.

From 2000 to 2003 we created a curriculum with our own courses, and that was an important thing to do. We are a research center, essentially, but also we have a teaching component that is significant, although it is not our main mission. Before, we used to have our courses in Anthropology or Foreign Languages or History, and we used to have just half a dozen students in each class that we would offer once a year or once every other year. The number of students interested in Basque studies is not

large, but they are scattered from different universities in America, from Europe, or elsewhere. They are interested in diverse Basque topics, whether it is the industrialization of Bilbao, the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, the history of some aspect of the Basque Country, the language, political terrorism, or Euskara.

Since we are, or we have been until now, the only ones providing instruction on Basque studies in English, we had to reach out and get information to those few people who want to write their paper or their thesis and have interesting, good, and significant projects with great potential. (A Basque Studies Program at Boise State University was established in 2005.) We felt that the format of the online instruction really fit us well. Then again, if we do not provide this instruction, nobody else will.

So we created about a dozen courses on Basque cultural studies, literature, cinema, museums, social linguistics, cyberculture, modern history, economy, social institutions, and politics—in English. We offer them not only online but also on campus. For example, in spring 2006 I did fieldwork in Bilbao, and I taught an online course on Basque culture as if I was in Reno, essentially in the same way. So the Internet and online teaching allows us freedom to do research.

Now, we have a significant number of students through this medium of the Internet, so the online courses are also a way of justifying or fulfilling our mission of teaching. It is in that spirit that we started online teaching, and it has been very positive for us. In the last two years that I've taught Basque culture, I have had the maximum number of students, which is thirty students, online. These numbers in our small world are significant.

We wrote and published the textbooks that accompany these courses, which provided an opportunity for the authors to have a textbook and a course in English. In the end, we are the beneficiaries of a lot of work done by these authors. Also, at the time of the implementation of the online courses we had Nere Amenabar who helped with their design. Many thanks to Nere.¹ A lot of these things have been done with the help and hard work of a lot of people who do this just because of their love for Basque studies.

A few of these revamped courses on campus are diversity courses and capstone courses. We also have a minor in Basque studies online, which is the first minor online in any discipline

at UNR. So that has made our courses far more desirable, and we have far more students. That has also made our teaching more interesting because of the intrinsic nature of the courses themselves—war and memory, identity across countries, the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, or cinema—not just because of the Basque connotations. So we have really expanded our presence in the university in that regard.

The other major change we have made was to create a new research agenda, which encompasses mostly an annual conference on a cutting-edge topic. The first conferences have been on politics, on the Guggenheim, on oral literature, and on diaspora. Other conferences could be on literature, cinema, juridical institutions, and the language. The conferences bring together specialists from the Basque Country and from American and European universities to mix their approaches and their discourses. Then, we publish the results of those conferences. We have already brought speakers of prominence to our conferences, like Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, John Beverley, and Dean MacCannell. So we have become far more prominent in the university.

We have also expanded our publication agenda exponentially in order to increase research on different topics. We have created five new Basque series, one being conference papers from our annual gatherings. A second is a series of Basque classical authors in which people like Julio Caro Baroja or Koldo Mitxelena or Jose Miguel de Barandiaran will be published in English in well-translated, nice editions. A third series has to do with literature and translation, because there are significant Basque writers that deserve to be translated. A fourth series has to do with migration and diaspora studies, and the fifth series is the textbook series that I just mentioned.

One of the most important things that Bill Douglass is known for is the creation of the Basque Book Series. You don't have any kind of study without a text. Bill published throughout the history of Basque Studies about fifty books, and that has been a major breakthrough in Basque studies. Now, if you look at this global academic world, it's not much that you have fifty books on the Basques, if you are going to cover all the different fields. One of our challenges is to publish far more on the different fields. There is so much published in Spanish and Basque, but there are just one book or two books in English. We have to

expand that, and the Nevada Press has been just excellent for us, and we owe a lot to the press in every sense.

There has been a significant change in the industry of publishing academic books this last decade. This has resulted in more difficulty in marketing academic monographs. In our case, Nevada Press is going to have increasing difficulty in publishing our books if they are not made marketable. This prospect has pushed us into fundraising for subsidies for publication and distribution of books. We have gone to the Basque institutions, saying, "We need help to publish books on Basque literature or on Basque classic authors in English, and we need to distribute them to libraries and have a way of marketing these books."

We have substantially increased publication, and I think it's still not enough. We could and should publish more, but we are a small group. We are probably publishing 90 percent of all academic books published on the Basques. If we don't publish them, there's nobody else to do it. So we have this pressure on, "You do it, or nobody else does it." We have the pressure to get the funding and the experts on translations, on editing, on indexing, on layout, and to be able to do a nice job and to distribute and promote the books.

We're just beginning to create a new infrastructure for promotion and distribution of the books that we will be publishing. We had to take into account that this is for us a new area of work in the sense that publishing has its own rules and has its own world that you have to be aware of, and we're just getting into it. So we still lack a lot of experience on this. But we have made here another qualitative step, I believe.

We have gotten far more involved in the Basque-American diaspora, since we have become part of NABO. Our thinking is to create courses and to publish, but for whom? We need students, and the Basque community should be the first ones interested in Basque studies. We wanted to let them know what we do. We were being accused of living in an ivory tower and not being connected with them. We said, "We are quite willing to do whatever—a lecture, a presentation of a book, a film—you ask us to do in any festival in order to provide the cultural component that is needed."

They invited us to be a member of NABO, which was their idea, and we said, "OK." There were some initial difficulties, because we are not a Basque club but an academic center.

However, they sorted it out legally for us, and we were the first academic entity in NABO. In exchange, we created, for example, the Ikasi program for Basque adults to learn about their culture. It is an Elderhostel program. That's how we opened up to the Basque community, and they really received us well, and they were happy. So we became actively involved in cultural activities in the Basque-American community.

We will have a resident grant to bring to Reno artists, writers, and filmmakers from the Basque Country. So these are things that I foresee will be coming in a year or two. We are expanding the academic world of Basque studies, and I think we have made improvements. Certainly, we have to significantly increase our research on migration and diaspora. We have already started a genealogy project, which is the beginning of a much larger project that Gloria Totoricagüena will carry out under her directorship starting in January 2006.

How the genealogy project came about is one more example of how the center is at a crossroads of every topic that pertains to the Basques. Genealogical interest is one of an increasing number of interests that more and more people have because of online technologies. In the past we had lots of inquiries about surnames and genealogical trees and so on, and our way of replying to this was to refer them to some experts in the Basque Country. Then, in 2002, we began considering the possibility of having some genealogical expert from Europe replying to these questions. Two of our advisory board members initially showed great interest in this, and we thought that perhaps their donations to the board could go into genealogy.

Our initial reaction to this was rather ambivalent in the sense that Linda, Bill, the new members, and I were not experts in genealogy. We hadn't been trained, and we felt that we, each one of us, had our own research priorities. Yet, on the other hand, we became increasingly aware that genealogy was an open field that could lead into instant studies in history and oral tradition, and it was one more way of approaching Basque migration studies. In 2004, one of the board members, Pete Ernaut, once again showed interest in Basque genealogy, and he thought he could help us, and we told him that we were also interested.

We decided to make a genealogical conference in Bilbao, where we gathered experts in the field [Conference on Basque

Genealogy, April 18-19, 2005]. The Basque-American genealogy project could entail large databases on the presence of the Basques in the United States through all existing U.S. Census data. This could really open doors into knowing more than we know now about the migration of the Basques to this country and other countries, systematically. The idea was to complement from Reno the massive project on all the sacramental books of the Basque parishes, which is supported by the Basque government under the Basque bishopric's supervision.

This is pretty much the genesis of the genealogy project, and in the future it could be a flourishing field. But it will have to be as a branch of the center, because we are not experts on this. We could put up the infrastructure and train people in genealogy, and it could have its own set of publications of interest. Time will tell how far we go, but if there is real interest, it might also be self-funding, in that people would pay for genealogical research on their family trees.

We Basques are a very small group, and Basque immigration into the U.S. has been rather reduced, and we cannot compare with standard ethnic groups like the Polish or the Irish. For a series of historical reasons, the Basque Studies Program was created at the University of Nevada, Reno, and we have been the only Center for Basque Studies in the U.S. doing research for several decades. But let us not forget that we are a very small center. We are just at the very basic stage of having a library, of offering a series of courses, of having a series of publications on Basque scholarship from history to political science, language, and other topics.

We have become an obligatory reference place for anything having to do with Basque politics or language or history, so that has given us a lot of name recognition. But the reality is that we cannot boast of having what we don't have. In terms of Basque studies internationally, we are almost the only name, because we publish in English, and in this global academic world English is the lingua franca, and we have benefited from that, obviously. But, the reality is that Basque studies is a very minor field of American academic studies, and because it is so minor, in a way, it's easy to do significant steps.

Our new bylaws state that every three years we have to select a director. I have served two trienniums, so my directorship ended in December of 2005. I'm quite happy to go back to my research

and writing. I've done my share of what I owe to the center in that regard.

However, I believe that we need to continue to improve and expand what we are doing in a gradual way. I think there could be a much larger international collaboration of different universities, and to the extent that we can do that we will have a more international university of Basque studies and international research collaboration on diaspora studies. I think it is for us to achieve as much as we can.

It isn't the quantity but the quality of research that is of value. Quantity is not enough. The quality of a good book can have far more impact than ten not-that-good books. I think we are heading towards the internationalization of the Basque university and systematic research on Basque diaspora studies, as well as the creation of cultural and artistic networks, in which we could bring Basque academics, writers, artists, filmmakers, and opinion-makers through different universities. By creating that network we could cover this country and other countries throughout South America. We are still far from creating that network, but we are making the first steps. It will be a lot of work, but I think there's much that can be done, and we can see the initial steps being taken in that direction.

Being from here, being from there

I have lived outside the Basque Country at least two-thirds of the last thirty years of my life. By now I consider myself American. My son is American, and I've decided to get American citizenship. [Joseba obtained U.S. citizenship in February of 2007.] Certainly, as a Basque American, I feel that my Basqueness is very much mediated or filtered intellectually, aesthetically, and even politically in some sense by living in the U.S. I am very critical of the politics of George W. Bush, but I owe to the U.S. my anthropological education, and I am at home here.

At a level of intellectual biography, of course, and even at the level of personal identity, I am very much "contaminated," and happily contaminated, by being an American. Since my kids are from here now, certainly I feel intellectually and politically committed to this country as much as to the Basque Country, although my primary identity is still Basque.

In that regard, an important part of my intellectual function, to a significant degree, is to be a broker between the American academic and intellectual world and the Basque world. Still, I feel that I am from here, and I don't feel like I'm, in any way, in exile or out of my element. I am quite happy living here, and I don't dream of having to go back anywhere.

When you come here, you think, "Well, I'll go back after some time." Now I don't think of retirement as an either/or, either here or there. In practical terms, it might come to that at some point, but in terms of imagining myself in the future, I don't see an either/or. I see myself living in both places, traveling back and forth between both worlds, and it is that living back and forth between the two worlds that I most cherish.

From the U.S. or the American public perspective, you can hardly understand Basque politics. My feeling is that there is an enormous ignorance of what Basque is, because, first of all, it is a difficult thing to understand. The Basque Country, in its smallness, becomes so labyrinthine and so complicated that people from here don't have the patience or the time to understand it. It's too complicated for such a small thing. What is going on in Basque politics is ignored from here.

On the other hand, I think there is knowledge of Basques, through articles in *National Geographic* or even some films and documentaries, as kind of a different linguistic and cultural group somewhere there in the Pyrenees between Spain and France, which can easily be exoticized. Particularly in the American West, we are known for the tradition of Basque migration to these states and the entire shepherding complex.

From the Basque Country perspective there is an anti-American sentiment and a rather negative view of American politics for a variety of reasons, in a situation like now particularly. There have also been a lot of television programs on Basque TV regarding Basques in the U.S., and because of the distance and projective nature of these images, inevitably, they are colored in a very stereotypical way. In some sense they are unreal and idealizing as all projective images are. Basques in the Basque Country have a sense of Basques in Reno or in Idaho that is perhaps not very realistic.

In the global culture in which we live, I think there is a need for creating global images. Basque TV, Basque nationalism, and the Basque society in general need these images of globalism,

also. The Basques in the American West are good candidates to project these Basque global representations. It might look like too much is being made out of it, and if Basque TV is so interested in this, it's partly because they are creating this idea of the Basques being global, which is historically real, but it adds to the idea that we Basques have migrated suddenly, and we live in the American West by tens of thousands of people. If you have a guy with a tattoo, wow, we are Basque and as American as what we see in Hollywood movies.

How real are these images? This aura of globalism that comes through the media, art, museums is part of the culture in which we live, and in that construction of globalization for the Basques, we are pretty much the targets of that demand from the Basque Country. I think we fulfill that role of being presented from the Basque Country. "Look, we are also Americans." Well, we are just filling that role, and one could feel some ambivalence about it, but on the other hand, I see it as quite normal. To see Basqueness not as something entirely local could also be a positive thing. Basqueness can be an element of globalization, and being Basque can be a way of being international, of being beyond boundaries, of being beyond nations.

Basqueness, through its migrations, through its maintenance of cultural heritage, through its learning of languages and cultures outside of the Basque Country, is an element of globalization. In that regard it is an enrichment of the tapestry of different cultures and different languages. It looks like it has to be fake, because it is so telegenic, and it is so much created by TV. There is obviously that fakery of something being seen through the TV, but I find it part of a world of communications and image parameters in which we live, and it's unavoidable.

I, as a writer who lives outside of the Basque Country, believe that providing to these very local Basque realities an international, historical, amplified, and larger context that is outside of their so-called original or homeland or native context is something that enriches and actually makes the Basque reality be understood in a much more appropriate light. It shows you that your Basqueness was created initially in this interaction of historical, political, and cultural currents, so you understand your own identity in better ways.

Whatever is the richness or the value of your tradition, it becomes better understood in a context that also includes the

exterior to who you are or where you move to. The intellectual task from the diaspora of defining Basqueness in this global context is a very important function that we have to accomplish from here if we are going to understand what it is to be a Basque.

To be a Basque is not only to have Basque surnames and to be born in a Basque area in a rural milieu, but to be Basque is to have a historical and cultural appreciation of your past, and this is a crucial part of what Basqueness has to offer in this world besides the brute fact that you were born there. If you are living in San Francisco, Manila, or Buenos Aires, to get interested in the tradition, migration, and history of your former generations and how they came to live wherever they are now and how they used to live, to talk, to think in previous centuries is crucial.

The model of Basqueness becomes far more interesting if it is in this globalized, hybrid, and international context than it is in the context of your being born or having always lived in the Basque Country or that you have never mixed with anything else. In redefining Basque realities, identities, histories in these other contexts and still preserving them, there is something intrinsically interesting to Basque identity, in terms of language, tradition, aesthetics, expressions, histories, or oral narratives. In this mixture of things, Basqueness becomes far richer than just this pure thing that is untouched, nothing but Basque.

It is our intellectual mission, in the diaspora, to redefine Basqueness in those terms and to make the Basques from the Basque Country conscious that all identities are partly constructed and partly very historical. We understand better who we are when we become far more open to mixing ourselves with other cultures. So we see the richness of who we are in its own terms, not just because we have been born Basque or because whatever we have is the best thing in the world.

We have known other things in the world, we have known other cultures, other languages, and still we appreciate ours, because it is ours, because that is how our grandparents talk, and we thought it had to do with something sacred or something untouchable. We like it because it's ours, but we are above our own culture of progress and our own culture of tradition. We can make with it whatever we want, because it is ours.

When your identity is the result of your own election rather than something that is given you by birth, there is a new sense of value. When you choose to study your tradition, and when

you choose to appreciate it because it's yours, not because you're just given it, there's an added value to that. We also have to make the Basques in the Basque Country realize that being a Basque in San Francisco is as interesting as, or *more* interesting than, being a Basque in Lekeitio. In Lekeitio you are Basque because that's all that is there, basically. But if you decide to continue being Basque in San Francisco, it's because, on top of being American, you *want* that culture for yourself that in itself has a value that shouldn't be seen as a decaffeinated identity and that is being chosen by the people.

Notes

1. Nere Amenabar was a visiting doctoral student from the University of the Basque Country in 2000. Since 2001, she has been the Web course designer in Independent Learning at UNR.

PART THREE

CARMELO URZA

Carmelo Urza was born in 1948 in the industrial town of Sestao, Bizkaia. At the age of five Carmelo, his brother, Enrique, and his mother, María Luisa, joined his father, Anastasio, in Boise, Idaho, where he grew up. He went to Boise State University from which he received a BA in Spanish with a minor in history and education in 1971.

Carmelo studied at the University of Madrid for a year in 1969 and in the Basque Country in the summer of 1972. In 1978, he received an MA in Spanish literature at the University of Nevada, Reno. In 1981 he earned a PhD in Spanish language and literature from the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

Carmelo founded the University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium (USBCC) in 1982 and has been its director ever since. The consortium would later become known as the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC).

UNR and Boise State University's study abroad programs

The first time I heard about the Basque Studies Program was from a friend of mine in Idaho, Sandy Boyd. She was my next-door neighbor. She is a Basque girl, and she had heard of the Basque



Carmelo Urza, 2007

Studies Program and of some scholarships that were available for study on its summer program in the Basque Country, and this was probably 1971. I was interested in studying abroad and got the information from her and applied for a scholarship. I was awarded one, and I ended up going to Landagoien in Iparralde and to Arantzazu in Gipuzkoa in the summer of 1972 through UNR's Basque Studies Program. The summer program was structured in that way in order to expose students to the political situation in the Basque Country while in Iparralde, since it was difficult to do so in the south because of Franco.

At the time, I was a teacher in Boise, Idaho. There were a number of Basque people from Idaho, particularly from Boise, who had also received similar grants, including other teachers, such as Julio Bilbao, a school principal, and Pat Bieter, a professor at Boise State University.

We were also exposed to a number of historical figures through Jon Bilbao during that summer of 1972. We had an opportunity to spend time with Telesforo de Monzón, who was just starting the political coalition HB [United People, in its Basque acronym]. Pat Bieter and I also spent an afternoon in Landagoien with Jon Etxabe, the head of the military ETA [Basque Homeland and Freedom, in its Basque acronym].

Etxabe was a big, strong, square-jawed man of mythical proportions, he was bigger than life. It was a difficult time. Etxabe's brother owned a bar outside of Oñati up on the hill going towards Bilbao, and a few years later his brother and his wife were killed by Guerrilleros del Cristo Rey [Christ the King Guerrilla Fighters—a Spanish neo-fascist death squad created after General Franco's death in 1975]. In 1979, in Baiona, Etxabe was shot by Triple A [Apostolic Anticommunist Alliance—another



Faculty and students of the Basque Studies Program Summer Session Abroad at the Arantzazu Monastery, 1972. Left to right: Carmelo Urza, Miren Rementeria, Julie Chacartegui, and Gloria Garatea. Playing *txistu* is Yon Oñatibia (with beret), accompanied by and unidentified musician.

far-right death squad active in the 1970s] and was hurt very badly, and his wife was killed.

One day, while the program was in Arantzazu, Jon Bilbao was driving Julio Bilbao, Pat Bieter, and I through the town of Oñati, and we went by this building, and Pat Bieter said, "What's that building over there?"

Jon Bilbao said, "That's the Colegio de San Lorenzo, and that belongs to the Canónigos Lateranenses [the Order of the Lateran Canons.] It's a seminary, and it's pretty much vacant these days, because there are not very many people going into the seminaries anymore."

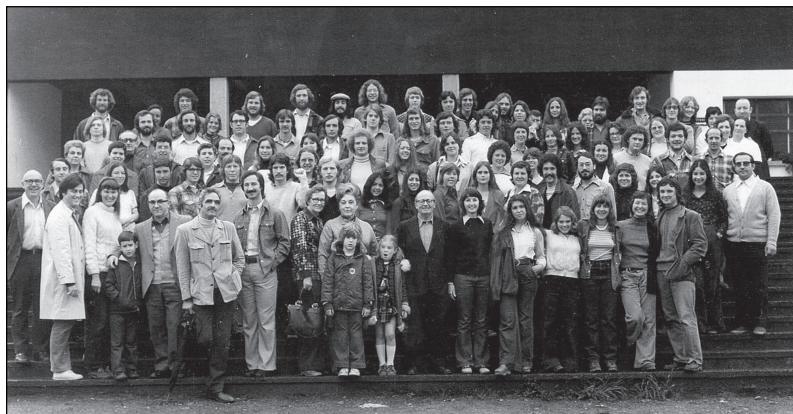
So, Pat said, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could develop an academic year-long program in Oñati in a building like that?"

When we went back to the U.S., Pat started working on the idea of establishing a year-long academic program for study in the Basque Country. Some of us helped in one way or other, but for the most part it was Pat Bieter who created what would be known later on as the Oñati program. The program was administered by Boise State University. The first Oñati program took place from September of 1974 through the spring of 1975.

(At the end of July 2005 in Jaialdi [the International Basque Cultural Festival that takes place every five years in Boise], we had the thirty-first anniversary of the Oñati program, and almost everybody went! We were a very close group, and it was moving to see everyone and sad in remembering the professors who passed away—Eloise and Pat Bieter, Jon Bilbao, John Woodworth, Joe Eiguren, Anes Mendiola, and Willis Sullivan. I am the only surviving professor from that group.)

During that summer of 1972 I also met Eloy Placer, who was from the Foreign Language Department at UNR, and Eloy offered me a Spanish teaching assistantship to do my master's in Reno. So I came to Reno for the 1973-1974 school year and worked on my master's degree. In the fall of 1974 I went to Oñati as the instructor of Spanish language and literature for Boise State.

Plans continued to develop for the program as normal. There were probably between seventy and eighty people from Boise, including faculty. However, about a week before we were to leave the U.S., there were like five *petardos* [small bombs] placed in the facilities that were being renovated for us at the Colegio of San Lorenzo, and it was a clear warning. Also, probably starting about a week or ten days before we arrived, there began to be passed out in Oñati a lot of pamphlets saying that the Americans who were coming were in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.



"We were a very close group." Faculty and students of Boise State University's Oñati program pose at San Lorenzo school, c. 1974-1975.

Jon Bilbao was apparently in contact with those folks, and Pat and I were told that there was no problem, "You should just go ahead and continue to come. No problem." So when we arrived at Bilbao's Sondica airport, it was taken over by the Guardia Civil [Spanish Civil Guard]. It was just surrounded by tanks and Guardias Civiles everywhere. It was just absolutely extraordinary. They were there to "protect" us. All along the road from Sondica to Oñati, like every kilometer or so, there was a Guardia Civil member standing there, all the way!

When we got to Oñati at night, the whole town had been taken by the Guardia Civil. There were dogs, horses, and *tanquetas* [small tanks]. To go in like that under those circumstances was just unbelievable! The entrance going up the hill to San Lorenzo was closed off by little tanks from the Guardia Civil. I remember Pat asking me to go up to the commander of the Guardia Civil and thank him for being there and caring for us, which was really a horrible thing to have to do. We had no choice.

Then later on in November of 1974, an article appeared in *Cambio 16* about how there were agents of the CIA in Oñati. *Cambio 16* was a magazine with credibility, and it would print things that maybe the dictatorship did not like. *Cambio 16* came to do an interview of all the students and the entire faculty. "Are you guys agents of the CIA?" and all the students were laughing.

I remember one of the student's quotes that got published saying, "Yes, we came here to steal the secrets of the chocolate factory Azor," because Oñati had three or four chocolate factories at the time.

Jon Bilbao had always been accused of being an agent of the CIA, so I would imagine that the article was directed towards him. He had apparently worked with the OSS, which was the precursor to the CIA, during the Second World War, trying to make things happen in the Basque Country.

Probably more than half of the students in the Reno program in 1972, in the Oñati program in 1974-1975, and in the University Studies of the Basque Country Consortium (USBCC) and then USAC, were of Basque descent. I think that the effect of that was the development of a group of young educated people in the United States who had been to the Basque Country, who spoke the languages, and who had re-established their roots in the Basque Country. They had sort of revitalized their ethnicity in

some ways, recharged their ethnic batteries—however you want to say it—and had done it by direct experience, not through the eyes of their parents who emigrated maybe in the 1940s or 1950s or 1960s and whose memory of the Basque Country was nostalgic and based in *baserris*.

Rather they came to know the Basque Country in its current state and developed friendships and really became grounded there, and that has had a huge impact. When you look around the American West, an awful lot of people who are leaders in Basque-American communities and are well educated were part of those study-abroad groups.

The first Oñati program also had a wonderful group of faculty. Yon Oñatibia was the Basque language teacher, and he also taught dance and *txistu* to several of the students. He was a wonderful human being and very warm and generous with his time. Joe Eiguren taught history and was very much involved and was a very passionate man, and he gave the group a tremendous amount of credibility. Anes Mendiola, who was a teacher, was born in Boise but spoke good Bizkaian Basque. She was with us the first time she ever went back to the Basque Country, and she was probably in her fifties. She was just a very strong, dynamic, wonderful woman, and I think she also gave the group a tremendous amount of credibility with all the local people. Anes Mendiola was like our house mother. Willis Sullivan, who also taught Spanish, was from Boise and was also a wonderful, enthusiastic, and warm human being.

Pat Bieter, who also taught, was the director. Then there was also John Woodworth and his wife Rebecca. John was a professor emeritus of the English Department for Boise State. He liked theater, and he was a great professor and just a tremendous presence, and he was just wonderful, as was Rebecca. Woodworth died in Oñati during that year, around March or April. His daughter was visiting with her husband and kids, and he just went to bed and passed away in his sleep. I think that was an experience for the students. There was no mortuary and no way of handling the body, so the students and the faculty had to get the coffin and go up to the fourth or fifth floor, get the body and put it in the coffin, take it to the cemetery, and then have a wake all night at the cemetery. There were a lot of experiences like that that made this group just extraordinarily close and very unique.



"Rather they came to know the Basque Country in its current state and developed friendships and really became grounded there, and that has had a huge impact." Yon Oñatibia gives a lecture to students and faculty of the 1972 Basque Studies Program Summer Session Abroad, Landagoien, Ustaritz.

Then, I remember that the first program in Oñati produced something in the neighborhood of eight to ten marriages, within a group of about seventy students. In part it was because there was a lot of interaction with locals. I think that the experiences lived by that group has been lost with the type of programs offered today. Oñati was a very small town, and there wasn't a whole lot to do. There were two movie theaters, and then, I think, ETA destroyed one of them. There was virtually no TV because ETA blew up the TV transmitter.

So a movie theater was all we had, and bars. Students would go downtown and go to the bars and talk to the local people. That's what everybody did. Also Oñati was very isolated. You couldn't get in or out of Oñati very well. There was no train getting out of there. You could take a bus, but it would take you forever to get to Donostia or Bilbao. Students were fairly isolated there. That was not positive, but as a result they relied upon themselves, and they spent a lot of time together.

In 1975 I came back to Reno for a year, and after completing my master's, then I went to the University of Iowa to do my PhD

from 1976 to 1981. (The title of the dissertation was "*Historia, Mito y Metáfora en La Saga/Fuga de J. B. Torrente Ballester*" ["History, Myth and Metaphor in J.B. Torrente Ballester's *La Saga/Fuga*".]) After I finished my PhD, I taught Spanish at the University of Richmond, in Richmond, Virginia, but I was always in contact with the people of Boise State, Pat Bieter and so on, and with the people at the Basque Studies Program, Jon Bilbao and Bill Douglass.

In 1981 there was some talk between Bill Douglass and Pat Bieter, and I was involved in those conversations. "Gosh, why don't we do something together and do some kind of a consortium effort between the Basque Studies Program and Boise State University?" The talks had to do with the possibility of joining forces and developing a consortium that would organize study abroad programs in the Basque Country and that would draw on a larger population than either Boise State or UNR alone drew on so they would have enough students to have a viable, ongoing program. The Reno and Oñati programs did not have much continuity. Following these conversations, I was hired by UNR in 1982 to run the new consortium program.

The Oñati program operated on about an every-third-year basis. After the 1974-1975 Oñati program, it continued sporadically. I know Patxi, from Elko, and his wife, Julie Chacartegui, directed the program one year, and then Pat Bieter probably directed it another year. Over a period of about ten years, the Oñati program probably functioned about three times. Each time the program kept getting smaller and smaller, and it was a greater struggle to continue to have that program go. They would announce the program, and then they would not have enough students, and they would cancel it, and the next year they would announce the program, and they would not get enough students, and they'd cancel it. And then the third year maybe they'd get enough students to have a program, and they'd go!

The same thing happened at the University of Nevada, Reno, with the Basque Studies Program. It had a summer program that went about every third year as well, and for the same reason. They wouldn't have enough students. Then the pool would kind of build, and at some point somebody would pull the plug on the pool, and everybody would go abroad. So you'd have to start that building process again.

From USBCC to USAC

My contract in Reno started on September 1, 1982, and the Basque government was having the first world Basque diaspora conference [The American Basques in the Basque Country Congress, September 2-7, 1982, Donostia-San Sebastián]. I had an opportunity to go over there, as they agreed to pay for my airplane ticket. The Basque government was paying for Basque representatives to go from all over the world to San Sebastián and have some kind of voice in the Basque government sponsored activities, more than anything. I participated in the conference for a week, and then I was able to start organizing the program, so I kind of piggy-backed.

Bill and Jon Bilbao had talked to Gregorio "Goio" Monreal and then to Enrike Knörr, who were the *rector* and *vice-rector* of the University of the Basque Country respectively. So by the time I really came on board, there was some semi-formal understanding that the program would be established in Vitoria, because that's where *filología Vasca* [Basque philology] and *filología Española* [Spanish philology] were taught.

I went to Vitoria, and I spent probably five or six days there with Enrike Knörr, who was the president of the campus of Vitoria, which was just starting. Enrike is a very, very nice man and immensely helpful and a good friend to this day, but I thought that the campus was too underdeveloped.

The university campus did not exist, there were no real buildings, and there was no real student life. Enrike hadn't even moved to his office yet. The city itself was fairly small and provincial at the time, and the Basque government was just getting started. [Vitoria-Gasteiz is the seat for the Basque government.] Everybody went to Vitoria to work during the week, and they all left on weekends and went back to their towns.

I didn't think at that time that Vitoria was the most interesting or appropriate place for American or Basque-American students to go. Basque was not spoken on the streets at all. Since nobody, or very few people, in Vitoria spoke Basque, it seemed a little awkward to go from the United States to Vitoria to study Basque where Basque was not spoken. It was not a place where one could go and study Basque easily.

So I started looking at other places and talking to other people. I talked one time with the University of Deusto, even, and they

were very interested. I thought that Oñati was a wonderful, wonderful place, a beautiful place. However, it was a small place for a lot of students of diverse backgrounds. There were very few resources and very little to do. It was a very, very authentic place but very limiting. It also was very difficult to get in and out of and very restricted that way. (I love going to Oñati still. Every time I go to the Basque Country, I always try to go to Oñati and to Arantzazu [the Arantzazu Franciscan monastery]. I feel very close to Arantzazu.)

In fact, all of the university students from Oñati were all studying in Bilbao and Donostia. They weren't in Oñati. So I thought that was far better to find a place where American students and students from other countries would have the opportunity to be able to meet people of their own age. I think that's probably one of the most important things that we can do as an organization, and that is to provide the contacts for our students to meet and befriend and spend time with local students. That's an extremely important aspect of our job.

Ultimately, I asked Goio if we could start the program in Donostia. I thought that it was probably a more interesting place at that time, and perhaps at some point in the future we could expand or change. Considering what we were trying to accomplish, I thought Donostia was more appropriate and more attractive, with a beach, the bay, the magnificent views, and the much higher rate of Basque speakers and much better contacts. It had more university infrastructure, it had more buildings, and it had a lot more faculty. It had infinitely more human and physical resources than Vitoria at the time. Goio was kind of reluctant, because he knew that Enrike Knörr really wanted us to go to Vitoria, but he acquiesced and was very gracious about it, and he helped us then get established in Donostia.

Goio was a law professor, and his office at the law school was vacant, and he let us use his personal office as a place for the resident director, who was Sandra Ott, during the first year. Sandra Ott, an American from Pomona, California, had just finished her PhD at Oxford in anthropology, and her field of studies was Basque culture in the French Basque Country. So she had a great affection and knowledge of the Basque culture, and this was kind of an interesting stretch for her.

We also had some office spaces up in Zorroaga, which was, at the time, pretty grim and pretty primitive. That building, the

aula magna, eventually collapsed about eight years later. It was a cold place in the winter and the students had to sit in classrooms with gloves and sweaters. Then we were able to use some of the other buildings around the law school, such as the *barracones* [barracks], which were mobile or temporary buildings with very small classrooms. They would only hold about fifteen or twenty people in a class, so they were not very usable for the very large classes that the Basque University had there. But they were perfect for us. We started piecing the thing together, and that's how we started the program, which was the first program.

The first group of students went to Donostia in late August or September of 1983. There were twenty-eight students, including Kate Camino and her sister Marguerite, and that was the kick-off. The consortium, at the time, was called the University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium. It was the first academic year-long program, and we continue to organize them to this day. Then, we started a summer program in the Basque Country in 1984.

We spent the first month in Hondarribia at the youth hostel there up on a hill. During that time we would drive students



USAC classroom in Donostia-San Sebastián, 1986.

back and forth in order to find housing for the students in San Sebastián. Then in October when the University of the Basque Country opened its doors, we all moved from Hondarribia to San Sebastián. We did that for about three or four years, until we had enough experience to be able to move all the students to San Sebastián.

There had been a lot of student strikes over the first fifteen years or so in the Basque university, but we've always had a sort of strategy of being able to move our classes to non-university buildings. We had to have the classes in order to be able to meet our contact hours for American accrediting standards. Otherwise, it could have been a disaster for us. At the same time, we tried to be sensitive to the political situation and did not want to breach the strike and go on campus and have our classes like nothing was happening.

For example during our first program in 1983, if I remember correctly, we had acquired some books in English, so we had a little bit of a library, and then the week when classes began and the university began, the library closed for renovation or for some other reason. So there was no library for quite some time, and Sandra Ott had the books in the trunk of her car, and that became the library for awhile.

Sandra was resident director in Donostia for three years, and then she went back to Oxford. She was commuting back and forth from Oxford to the Basque Country, because her husband was at Oxford. When we opened up a summer program, it became a bit too much of a demand on her time, so she relinquished the position and went back to Oxford. The quality of her work is evident to this day. Félix Menchacatorre took over the position.

Félix had just finished his PhD in Spanish literature from the University of Cincinnati and had been teaching at Xavier University in Cincinnati. So he went back to the Basque Country and was one of our first teachers, as was his wife, Patricia O'Connor. Now, Patricia is resident director of the San Sebastián program, and Félix is resident director of the Bilbao program and the overall USAC coordinator in Spain. Félix has been with USAC for twenty-four years, and he has been absolutely instrumental in the success that USAC has had in San Sebastián, in Bilbao, in the Basque Country, and in all of the Spanish state. He is also responsible, I'm sure, for USAC receiving the Tambor de Oro [Golden Drum] Award in 1995. He does not get the public

recognition that he should for all of his contributions. He's a very intelligent, dedicated, hardworking, and honorable human being.

Obviously, I'm the USAC employee of the longest duration, and then Félix, Patricia, and Luis Mokoroa are the longest. Luis is a chef in San Sebastián and president of La Cofradía Vasca de Gastronomía [the Basque Gastronomic Society]. For the last twenty-four years he has taught the Basque cuisine class to our students at the *cofradía* in Donostia, which is very nice and very authentic. They've just been wonderful over the years.

Then, in 1984 we started organizing a program in Pau University, France, that went into effect in the fall of 1985. And again, there was kind of a Basque connection. There was a Basque scholar, Txomin Peillen, teaching at Pau, so we thought that a new program would be attractive to French Basques to study Basque and also French. Then in fall of 1987 we established a program in Turin, Italy. It was probably somewhere around the establishment of the Italy program when we changed the name of the consortium to the University Studies Abroad Consortium, so that it had a broader appeal and was more accurate. (The change of name happened around 1988, 1989.) We have almost always had programs in kind of unusual places, and we have set ourselves apart from other study abroad organizations. We are, I believe, to this day the only American program in San Sebastián, in Pau, and in Turin. They've all been great, very authentic, and interesting places to educate students.

The heritage of USAC was to create programs, the opportunity for American and Basque-American students to study in the Basque Country, and that was the original purpose of the consortium. We have always been focused on the Basque Country and still are today. The Donostia program is still a very popular and wonderful program with a great quality.

Both my children, Gabriel and Alexandra, studied in the program in San Sebastián for an entire year, and I'm a believer in it. Our second program in the Iberian Peninsula was in Bilbao, and we kept focusing on the Basque Country. We then started having a sort of increase, and this was during the growth years in Spain, so we wanted to create a third site. We talked to the Public University of Navarra on several occasions, and we went over to meet with them. They never got back to us. I guess they weren't interested.



"We have almost always had programs in kind of unusual places, and we have set ourselves apart from other study abroad organizations." Carmelo Urza holding the 1990-1991 USAC catalog.

We realized that we had to create another program site somewhere else, so we started looking around, and we started talking to a lot of different universities, and we found a Madrid university and also a university in Alicante. The Alicante university really came by surprise in some ways. We didn't really think we wanted to go there, but we talked to them, and we realized that they were really good people and it was a nice campus, a terrific setting, and that everybody was starting to go to Alicante. So we thought, "Boy, we better jump on this while we have a chance." And we're so lucky that we got in, because now there are probably four or five American programs in Alicante, but we were there early, and we're very happy with that.

The other university that we made an agreement with—and this was a mistake—was the Spanish extension university, called UNED, the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia [the National University of Long-distance Education]. That was the biggest university in Spain with 120,000 students, huge! The facilities we were using were outside of Madrid in Las Rozas, and they were absolutely magnificent. They had state-of-the-art

facilities with a beautiful cafeteria and great everything. You couldn't ask for anything better. So, we signed a contract with them.

However, their students were adults with jobs and families and tended to go to the university at four or five o'clock in the afternoon, so there were very few students on campus during the day. They had this facility open and just empty all day long. Those students weren't the kind of students that our students would hang with, because they were not traditional students. Our students lived in Madrid, and it would take them forty-five minutes to an hour to get to Las Rozas by bus, which was the only way of getting out there. So we were with UNED for one or two years, and then we both realized that it was a mistake.

We were very lucky to find the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos I [King Juan Carlos I University], and we're still there now. It's been a wonderful university, a wonderful relationship. It's the University of the Autonomous Community of Madrid under the name of King Juan Carlos I. They have magnificent facilities and beautiful campuses. They have cafeterias, a magnificent new library, and great buildings of all sorts.

There are three campuses of that university, and we are on the campus of Vicálvaro, which is also a metro stop, so our students, who all live in Madrid, jump on the metro, walk out of it, and they are at the campus. There's a law school, they teach sociology, political science, liberal arts, and their students are very compatible with our students.

Developing the consortium: administration and finance

Pat and Bill were able to put together some initial funding for the consortium. My recollection is that Bill Douglass personally put up \$7,500. In Boise the Simpson family put up \$7,500 for the beginning of this consortium. Boise State University and the University of Nevada, Reno also contributed \$7,500 each.

Both Pat and Bill in different conversations asked me individually if I wanted to head up that effort, and that's how it happened. So I said yes, and I was very happy to do so, and then they said, "Would you want to organize it from Boise or from Reno?" I was from Boise, and I wanted to organize it from Boise. My wife, Monique Laxalt, was from Reno and wanted to live in

Reno. So I guess that's how we wound up in Reno. But I am happy here. [laughter]

We started the consortium with UNR and Boise State, and then the University of Iowa, where I did my PhD, joined just right after that, because I knew some key people there. I did my BA at Boise State, my MA at University of Nevada, Reno, and my PhD at the University of Iowa, so I felt very comfortable working with those universities. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) came on next.

The fifth university to join was Fresno with Jeri Echeverria, who was at the time just a professor in the History Department. Now she is provost of Fresno State, and we're all very proud of her. I think after Fresno possibly Chico was the next university, and then probably University of Idaho, which was, back then, part of another consortium.

One of the keys of our consortium is to maintain a balanced and egalitarian relationship between all the member universities, to make sure that everybody gets what they *need* out of it, and that they all have a voice in the consortium in the decision and policy making. That is, we wanted USAC to be a true consortium, and I think it is.

In the early years, Pat, Bill and I may have met for a drink at different occasions and talked about consortium matters, and it was really kind of three guys having a meal. Later on we formalized that, and we created a board of directors. So then the board of directors had one representative from the first nine universities that were in the consortium. After nine I realized that it was becoming more unwieldy and it would be much more difficult to operate efficiently. It would be very difficult to get, say, twenty-two people to sit in a room and make any kind of decisions. So we limited the board of directors to representatives of the first nine members.

People talk about consortiums all the time and, many, many consortiums come and go. They're very, very difficult, sensitive, and delicate to maintain. They're destroyed on a daily basis everywhere, because somebody starts dominating or getting the best out of it, and it becomes some kind of imbalance, and somebody doesn't feel like they're being taken into consideration, and so on. But we've been very, very successful so far in maintaining that balance and in creating academic credibility.

When we first started developing the consortium, I realized that there was a general notion at American universities that, yes, study abroad was fine, a lot of fun, but it was academically light, without a whole lot of serious academics going on abroad. I realized that the success that we might have was contingent upon the kind of academic credibility we could create. So we were very, very serious about the academic credibility from the beginning to the present, and I think that it has paid for itself over the years.

At the beginning, we used to take every university that ever applied to the consortium, and we were delighted to have them. Each new member provided credibility for us and gave us a broader student base. At this moment, there are a lot more universities that want to join USAC, and we're becoming much more selective. I don't think we want to grow a lot more. We have a fair number of universities that express interest in joining the consortium, but it is difficult for us to accommodate them without affecting our identity.

One criterion is that universities have to be from areas where we don't have much of a presence in the United States, for example, on the East Coast and in the Southeast. Another university in California or in Ohio, where we have five members already, would not have as much interest for us as a university in the Southeast, where we really have no members.

We also want universities that are going to bring academic credibility with them and that are going to increase our standing among our peers. The most recent universities that we accepted were the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the University of Maryland, College Park, Clemson University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Tulsa, and the University of Loyola in Chicago. Those are all first-rate academic institutions.

USAC has also been very, very lucky, because a million things can go wrong. For example, we're exposed to currency fluctuations, and indeed we've had a lot of problems in the last couple of years because of the drop in the value of the dollar. However, exchange rates also helped us once upon a time, when the dollar was increasing in value and we were able to create a reserve account, and now we've been able to suffer less through these very lean times because of that reserve account. Had it happened the other way around where the dollar dropped before

it became really very, very strong, we would not have had a reserve account, and we would have died on the vine.

We were, and are, what's called a self-funded program, so we have to basically create our own revenues from student fees, and there are some economic realities to organizing study-abroad programs. You have to hire people, you have to be able to pay salaries, and you have to meet payroll like any other economic enterprise, because we're an economic enterprise that has a certain economic reality in certain economies of scale. The economy of scale is just simply an economic principle, in which the larger you are—the more units or students that you have—the less you have to charge to be able to produce this product. So, we're able to operate more efficiently as we have grown.

If we had one program in the Basque Country with twenty-eight students—one little program for one set of students—and we had x-number of faculty and staff in marketing and advertising and so on, it would not be a very efficient operation. So it was bound to suffer the same issues and the same problems as the previous attempts had happened at the Basque Studies Program and Boise State, in which you just simply would not have enough students to be able to create economic viability every year. I had left a position at the University of Richmond, and I did not want to fail, and I did not want to have a program once every three years.

If you were going to be advertising or marketing one program, it cost you the same to market four programs or five programs or six programs, because you just simply added one more line to the advertising that you were buying. This was a far better economic model than when we were spending a lot of money marketing one program for very few students to go to one particular place.

So really it was an issue of economy of scale. The first five years of the program I was the only person in the Reno office, and I did absolutely everything. I did the budgets, marketing, the catalog, the typing, the filing, and I also talked to the classes. I realized, nonetheless, that it was just simply too top-heavy of an organization for one program to be able to sustain that kind of administration.

So, the increase in the number of programs would provide a little bit of financial margin that could help contribute to advertising and administrative costs and general overhead of the

consortium. It was just a logical business arrangement, because we were receiving no subsidization.

Now, we are probably among the five or six biggest study-abroad programs in the United States, and we have had a lot of luck. We have 38 program locations in 25 countries, and we are sending about 2,500 students abroad in 2007, and we just started the consortium with 28 students. We have about 310 employees worldwide. We have 33 U.S. universities that are members of the consortium, and that's very important.

It's hard to tell how many students might have gone abroad with USAC over the years. I think we once kind of made some guesses and calculations, and maybe about 17,000 students have studied with us. Those are 17,000 really well-served students in the sense that they've gotten an international dimension that they would never have gotten otherwise. It's made the world, Idaho, Nevada, et cetera, much better places. It seems that half of Reno now knows where the Basque Country is, because they have all been there. [laughter]

There's been an evolution, obviously, in terms of how we've been housed administratively and physically. The consortium started from *within* the Basque Studies Program, and Bill Douglass and Pat Bieter were the two prime movers. My office was in the Basque Studies Program, and I was paid on the regular University of Nevada Basque Studies payroll. Then at some particular point they moved us administratively, but not physically, over to Continuing Education for a couple of years, and then we broke off and became independent. But while we were at Getchell Library—maybe the first sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen years—I occupied at least eleven different offices. If somebody was on sabbatical, that's the office I got, so we were all over that library. For the last five years or so we've been at the Old Gymnasium building.

I had been at UNR for a number of years, and I realized that I had to make a decision in terms of my own career—to remain the consortium's administrator or to go back to academics and teach. If I was going to continue as an administrator for the consortium, I wanted to have tenure, so I applied for and was granted tenure through the Basque Studies Program. I still participate in certain meetings and functions of the Center for Basque Studies. I'm very happy to have a role. I still enjoy it immensely, and it's really kind of nice for me to do something

different than the consortium. Also, the relationship between USAC and the Center for the Basque Studies is very complementary, as we collaborate and work well with them and with the University of Nevada, Reno.

The Center for Basque Studies' evolution has also been wonderful. Once upon a time it was Bill Douglass and his research and Jon Bilbao and his bibliography. Each had certain interests, and it was wonderful as far as that went, but Basque Studies did not have a great deal of outreach or variety to its activities. Since Zulaika took over as resident director, he's been able to maintain a wonderful initiative of thirty years that Bill started and expand upon it.

Joseba has been able to create more dimensions to the Center for Basque Studies: the Web classes, all the electronic stuff, more publications, conferences, closer contact with the Basque centers in the local Basque communities, and the creation and development of the advisory committee and the fundraising aspect. It's been very exciting to watch it from the outside.

It's easy to think that those comments diminish what Bill has done, but quite the opposite. Bill created a Basque Studies Program like nobody else could have. Given his circumstances, interests, personality, character, and so on, I don't think anybody else could have created the Basque Studies Program like he did. What Bill accomplished—the huge, huge dictionary project, publications, and credibility—was just absolutely unbelievable. But now there are a whole lot more people and a lot more professionals that are fully funded, and everybody's producing. It'll be a very, very exciting future for the center.

Basque Studies has perhaps a broader worldwide reputation than any other department on this campus, because it certainly has contacts and relationships with entities and individuals all over the world. However, since it has never been a teaching program, it has not traditionally been part of the fabric of the university. It's been part of the library, and it's been part of state funds, and it always has sat independent of the university in its normal activities. Now, Basque Studies is part of the College of Liberal Arts, and it has better visibility. In some departments like Anthropology and Foreign Language and so on it's certainly well-known, and there's a lot of collaboration with them.

Local and global outreach and awards

Throughout the years, I have been involved in a number of projects through USAC, Basque Studies, or just as myself. For example, the Basque National Monument was not a USAC project, and it was really a product of the individuals that were involved in it. Basque Studies was not involved as an institution, but Bill Douglass was very involved. So Bill and I were the ones involved at the university level, and Janet Inda¹ was very involved from the Basque community. The three of us were operationally important on a day-in day-out basis. There was another level in which Bob Laxalt and Warren Lerude and other committee members were very involved as well. In fact, Warren and Bob went to the Basque Country on a fundraising mission, and they worked with Nekane Oiarbide. Nekane was our primary contact person in the Basque Country, and she was instrumental in fundraising for the project in the Basque Country.

José Ramón Cengotitabengoa, a president of an iron import-export company in Chicago, came up with the idea of a Basque monument in 1984. At Pier Twenty-Three—I may be wrong about the number—in Chicago, there was a sculpture exhibit that the Basque government had participated in by taking the artistic pieces of three sculptors, Nestor Basterrechea, Remegio Mendiburu, and Vicente Larrea. José Ramón met these three sculptors, and he became very enthusiastic about the initiative and thought that we should springboard it into creating a Basque monument park in the United States with each of them creating a certain element.

I can't remember whether it was predominantly José Ramón as an individual—even though individually he was the one who actually funded it, spent time, and so on—or whether he was doing it as part of the Society for Basque Studies in America, as he was president of that organization at that time.

On at least two different occasions José Ramón took these three sculptors to Basque centers around the American West, and he brought them to Reno. They all presented their ideas and tried to get support for the ideas, and he spent really a couple years trying to get the project off the ground. Each one of them had one monumental project. Basterrechea had the Basque herder



"Warren and Bob went to the Basque Country on a fundraising mission." Bob Laxalt and Warren Lerude pose under the Tree of Gernika in the Basque Country. Left to right: Mayor of Gernika's wife, Mrs. Zusaeta, Nekane Oiarbide, Mayor Juan Luis Zusaeta, Bob Laxalt, Warren Lerude, and two unidentified individuals.

as an icon, very much like the sculpture that exists in Rancho San Rafael now. Larrea had the *makila* [a traditional Basque walking stick or cane] as a cultural icon. It's a big, red sculpture that looks sort of like an abstract *makila*. (That sculpture is now by the Sondika airport, just right between the two freeways, near Bilbao.) Mendiburu had a project of a head of a *carnero* [sheep] with the eyes and the nose hollowed out. It was a huge sculpture, a forty-ton granite monolith.

After a couple of years, José Ramón had some personal difficulties, and he had to resign from the project. However, he had gotten a lot of us excited about it. So at some point, a committee formed by Bob Laxalt, Bill Douglass, Janet Inda, Warren Lerude,

Preston Hale, and myself was established in Reno. We decided to go ahead and do the project ourselves, because Reno was a Basque-populated area between San Francisco and Boise and Elko and Ely. It was a centrally located place for the monument project.

However, we thought that three projects were just way too ambitious. When there had never been *one* Basque public project ever in the United States, to do three was just an overreach. So we decided to start with one project. Then, there was a selection process that took place in terms of how you select the monument. There were some really great sculptors who presented. Ultimately Basterrechea was selected, and his sculpture was the one to be built.



Left to right: José Ramón Cengotitabengoa, Joe Crowley, Bill Douglass, and Bob Laxalt pose next to Nestor Basterrechea's sculpture, *Orreaga* in the Getchell Library's main entrance, 1985.

We fundraised and planned for maybe two years before the project was finished. [The National Monument to the Basque Sheepherder was dedicated on August 29, 1989.] Janet Inda was the main person who fundraised in the United States for the committee, and the fundraising was primarily done in two ways. We were looking for institutional monies from the city of Reno and Washoe County Parks as well as *ayuntamientos* [town halls] and the *diputaciones* in the Basque Country. There was a minimum amount of money, something like \$7,500, to be able to get on that list. So we raised a fair amount of money that way, and then we raised the rest of the money by asking for \$300 donations for anybody who wanted to put a name on the plaque.

There were two categories of names on the plaques—one, just as a simple donor, and the other one was "In Memory of." So there were a lot of people who bought a name on a plaque in memory of their uncle, father, grandfather, and so on and so forth, who had been a sheepherder or had come over as a herder.

That was pretty widely supported, and more support from some areas than others, and we raised enough money to be able to make the project. [The total cost of the project was around \$350,000, and nearly half of it was raised in the Basque Country.]

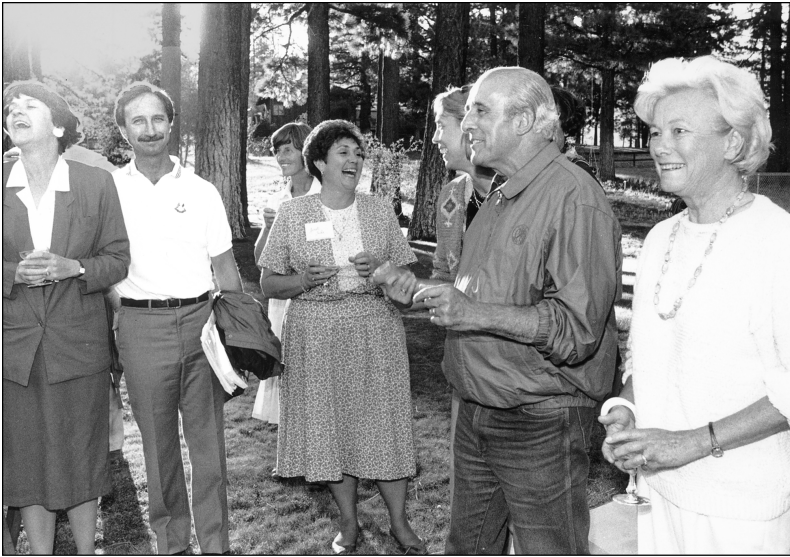
I describe a lot of this in my book called *Solitude* [*Solitude: Art and Symbolism in the National Basque Monument*, 1993], which is the name of Basterrechea's sculpture—*Bakardade* in Basque. It was titled that way because of the solitude of the herder, out by himself. It evokes a kind of emotional and physical strength that it took to be out there alone week after week, month after month, and year after year—a tremendous loneliness that one faced and how hard that was.

At the beginning, the Basque community in the United States wasn't enthusiastic about the sculpture, especially the first generation, because they did not understand abstract art. So they preferred a figurative sculpture, in which you would have a herder standing there with a hat and boots and holding a lamb in his hand and so on.

That figurative sculpture, called *The Shepherd*, actually, got made in 1998, and it was one that was not selected by the committee. It was done by a dentist from Auburn, Douglas Van Howd. *The Shepherd* is now at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Casino in Sparks. (Van Howd is the same guy who did the wolves sculpture that is located at the University of Nevada, Reno Stadium and the skier at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.)

Basterrechea, on the other hand, defended the abstractness of his work by saying that the mere external elements, like a hat, a coat, pants, or boots, did not really *tell* you about the herder. In fact, he said that to be a herder required a tremendous amount of mental and emotional strength. So he built a block-looking and very, very, very strong sculpture with huge arms and big neck, big everything to represent strength. In the back he engraved an allusion to the cosmos. It represented the herder emerging from the earth, being part of the earth and part of the cosmos, under the stars and so on. It was a complex message that could perhaps best be expressed using abstractions and symbols.

Some people in the committee thought that the more you could get people to come up and not see the Basque herder as a simplistic icon, but rather as a complex icon that required some interpretation and understanding of what the monument was



Reception at Bob Laxalt's residence to celebrate the completion of the Basque National Monument, August 29, 1989. Left to right: Secretary of State Frankie Sue Del Papa, Carmelo Urza, unidentified, Janet Inda, Nekane Oiarbide, Bob Laxalt, and Joyce Laxalt.

all about, the better the exercise would be. To be a sheepherder was much more than just simply to be out there with your hat, even if everyone agreed on what that hat looked like, which they didn't.

After more than fifteen years the Basque community has embraced the monument. The monument is in an area with some natural trails. For example, the Washoe County School District takes a lot of school children up there. They explain to them all the elements—certain trees, the water system, the creatures that live in the American West like coyotes, cats, owls—and also the herders and the sheep and how it worked in the American West as part of one whole environment.

A few years ago there was an article in the paper that stated that the Basque monument was still the most important public monument in Nevada. A lot of people go there and see it, and I think they do believe that, too. It's aged, also, and I think that aging is positive. The bronze is not so bright. It's more tarnished, and it's more part of the landscape. Of course, it is *also* a place where there really were sheepherders.



"[Basterrechea] said that to be a herder required a tremendous amount of mental and emotional strength." Carmelo Urza speaking at the dedication ceremony of the Basque National Monument, Rancho San Rafael, Reno. On his right is the sculptor, Nestor Basterrechea.

The national monument is one of a number of Basque-related projects in the area. During the summer of 2007, by the way, a new Basque exhibit was added to Rancho San Rafael, down on the main park and next to the museum and botanical garden. The herder was becoming mainstream and moving downtown. I did propose the sister cities project to UNR, the city of Reno, and the city of Donostia-San Sebastián, and each accepted. They were cities that were about the same size, they had a similar economy based on tourism, there was a sort of ethnic tie between the Basques here and the Basques there, and they were connected through the Basque Studies Program and through USAC, so it made sense. Hundreds of students from Reno were going to San Sebastián and living long periods of time there, and people from the Basque Country and the University of the Basque Country were coming here and spending long periods of time. So there was a lot of relationship, a lot of traffic, a lot of activities going back and forth, and so it was a very lively relationship.



Basque President José Antonio Ardanza (left) receives a replica of the Basque National Monument from Bob Laxalt (right) and Carmelo Urza, March 1988.

I asked Joe Crowley to go to the city council meeting with me for the vote of the proposal, and Joe was great at helping like that. He was always willing to help in those kinds of things and had enormous credibility. I went to Donostia with Pete Sferrazza, who was the mayor of Reno at the time. I was enormously grateful for Sferrazza to accept to represent Reno at the sister cities' twinning ceremony in January 1990. He paid for his *own* ticket to Donostia. It was a wonderful, eloquent, and beautiful ceremony.

Also, a second mayor of Reno, Jeff Griffin, went to San Sebastián to the Basque Country, at a different time, and participated in a conference, all pretty much on a voluntary basis on his part. With the passage of time, I think that Donostia has been somewhat disappointed with the relationship, because they tend to see twinning activities in terms of putting together choirs

and sending them to each others city. These kinds of activities are proposed by the twinning committee in San Sebastián and paid for by the city hall, and there's a budget for that. However, there's no budget for that in most U.S. cities.

While we've had at least two mayors of Reno who have gone to Donostia on their own nickel to represent the city and be part of the activities, ironically, no active mayor of Donostia has ever been in Reno. We have sent three or four teams of girl soccer players from Reno to participate in the Donostia Soccer Cup, but Donostia has never sent anyone to come to Reno to participate in any activities. We have sent thousands of students from this area, and they've never sent any students in this direction.

So it's really kind of interesting from that perspective, because I think that most of the activity has been from here to there, and yet I've always got the impression that Donostia has been unhappy with the relationship. I would imagine, and that would be just my perception, that the relationship that Reno has with Donostia is probably the most active that Donostia has, but we send no choirs back and forth.

In January of 1995, USAC was awarded the Golden Drum Award [the *Tambor de Oro*] by the city of Donostia-San Sebastián. [Robert Laxalt received the same award in 1986.] Technically, the 1995 award was actually given to me, but I accepted it in the spirit of Basque Studies and USAC, and I believe that that was appropriate. The award has to be given to somebody who is not from Donostia, so locals cannot apply or are not considered. It predominantly recognizes activity or work that reflects well, positively, on the city. The award is given out during their annual festival, in which they have thousands of kids on the streets with drums, which are a symbol of the city. When we got this award, Justo Segura, a Basque priest from Japan, a missionary and a holy man out there doing good, also received it.

In April of 2001, the Nevada Legislature honored USAC, and that was a USAC award. It was a joint proposal of both bodies of the assembly and the senate, which was promoted by, or sponsored by Dina Titus. (Dina just ran for governor of the state of Nevada in November 2006, and she lost by four percentage points but was a very, very strong candidate.) Dina wanted to get USAC some public recognition for its many, many years contributing to the education of the state of Nevada. So it was



"I accepted it in the spirit of Basque Studies and USAC, and I believe that it was appropriate." Carmelo Urza gives an acceptance speech at the Tambor de Oro Award ceremony, Town Hall Donostia-San Sebastián, 1995.



Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 34 in honor of USAC, April 18, 2001. Left to right: Bill Raggio, Dina Titus, Bill Douglass, Carmelo Urza, Tom Wright, Lorraine Hunt, Susan Thompson, and Joe Crowley.

very wonderful that Dina worked to recognize us. I am very grateful for that. Bill Douglass, Joe Crowley, Susan Thompson from UNLV, and I went to the ceremony at the legislature, which was very nice.

Dina knows USAC well, because she has been a visiting professor at USAC in Donostia. She's a professor of political science. Her husband, Tom Wright, is a professor of history at UNLV, and on four occasions he has been a visiting professor for USAC in Chile, in Costa Rica, in Madrid, and Donostia as well.

In May of 2005, USAC received the Thornton Peace Prize, which was established by Bill Thornton and his wife, Barbara, in recognition of programs that promote peace in the world. So we were honored to have been selected for that prize. [USAC was nominated by Joseba Zulaika, then director of the Center for Basque Studies.]

USAC is an organization that we built over a long period of time, one brick at a time. I would never have imagined USAC five or ten years ago being what it is now, so I don't know that I could even possibly envision what it's going to be like five or ten years from now. [laughter] We might not exist five years from now very easily for a lot of reasons, such as exchange rates, war, terrorism, and a lot of bad things. But if we continue with the same sort of progress that we made over the last twenty-five years, I think that we are probably going to be sending more students abroad—even more students than we send now. We may also be sending them to more locations that are less traditional, non-European, but cutting edge, such as India, the Middle East, China, and Africa. And we will probably have more universities that belong to the consortium. I'm getting tired just thinking about it. [laughter]

Notes

1. Janet Inda was born in 1945 in Fallon, Nevada, and she became the first female president of NABO in 1979. Janet was involved with the Basque Studies Program and its collection of books during the early years, as she worked at the University of Nevada's main library.

Sandra Jean “Sandy” Ott was born in 1951 in Corry, Pennsylvania. She received a BA in English literature in 1973 from Pomona College in Claremont, California; an MLitt in social anthropology and a DPhil in social anthropology from the University of Oxford (Wolfson College) in 1976 and 1979, respectively.

From 1983 until 1991, Sandra was an Associate Fellow of St. Antony’s College, Oxford. From 1991 until 2002, she was a Supernumerary Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford and was elected as a Visiting Fellow of that college in 2002, a status she retains at present. From 1989 until 2002, Sandra served as coordinator of the Basque Visiting Fellowship at the University of Oxford, in conjunction with St. Antony’s College. She created the fellowship in 1982, with the help of Eusko-Ikaskuntza, the Society of Basque Studies, and the Basque government. Sandra was the chief administrator at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, from 1989 until she took up her position as an associate professor at the Center for Basque Studies in 2002.

The Basques of Santazi: north and south

I heard about the Basque Studies Program from the late professor Julian Pitt-Rivers, who was in Paris at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Social and then held the Chair of Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics. When I chose the Basques as the topic for my DPhil thesis at Oxford, I knew that I didn't want to go to Spain, Greece, or Italy, because that was where most anthropologists in those days were mainly going. Pitt-Rivers said, "Why don't you write to Bill Douglass at the University of Nevada in Reno at the Basque Studies Program?"

It was 1975, and Franco had just died. I wrote to Bill, and I still have his reply to me, in which he suggested that I should work in Iparralde, partly because nobody had done any anthropological fieldwork there. He also suggested that I should see Eugène Goyeneche in Ustaritz. So Eugène was the first person I met in the Basque Country. He in turn asked me what my objectives were, and I said the first thing I needed to do was to learn Euskara.

Eugène talked to me about possible sites for my fieldwork and recommended Santazi (*Sainte-Engrâce*) in Xiberoa. He thought it was an interesting place in terms of its culture, and he knew about its shepherding syndicates. I had said that I wanted an isolated and solidly Basque-speaking community, too, and Santazi was just about the most isolated place on the map at the time.

Eugène then got me into an *ikastola* [Basque language school] called Mendiberri, which was a Baiona organization. They were based in Uhart-Mixe just outside Donibane-Garazi. (I don't think it exists any longer.) I went there for a month. But when I decided to work in



Sandra Ott, 2007



"So Eugène was the first person I met in the Basque Country. He in turn asked me what my objectives were, and I said the first thing I needed to do was learn Euskara." The 1978 Basque Studies Program Summer Session Abroad students and faculty, Ustaritz. Far left: Eugène Goyeneche.

Xiberoa, I asked if I could learn Xiberotarra [the Basque dialect from the province of Xiberoa] rather than Euskara *Batua* [the unified Basque language], so Mendiberri found me a tutor, and I ended up living in a local café in Pagole, which was nearby. I lived with a family during that month rather than in the school, because the school was full of young people, who, I have to say, weren't terribly serious about learning Basque.

By then I had already done my MLitt, based upon fieldwork on a Gaelic-speaking island off Donegal in 1974-1975. I began my doctoral research in the summer of 1976. In 1977, I went to Reno to work in the Basque Studies Library for one month, and there I met Jon Bilbao. I lived upstairs at Louis' Basque Corner [a local Basque hotel and restaurant] for nine dollars a day, and every night I went to the bar and to the dining room to eat. In those days Louis' was full of many Bizkaian-Basques, so it was a great way to practice my Euskara.

At the time, Jill Berner was in Reno, and I remember, and she remembers, too, that Jon Bilbao used to smoke everywhere, including in the library, and she was always terrified that he'd set the place on fire, given that he was a rather distracted person

and would forget what he was doing. [laughter] I also saw Bill then, and I didn't see him again until 1998, which was the year that Basque Studies organized a conference that I participated in. The Basque Studies Program was a small operation, a very friendly environment, and I spent my days in the library, which had a fantastic collection. I have very happy memories of those days, of the program, and of Louis' Basque Corner.

At the end of my month, Jon came into my little study room and said, "Sandra, you've been here for a month, but you haven't been gambling." So he insisted that—even though my flight back to England left at 7:00 a.m. the next morning—the two of us should go eat crab at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks, which was then a very separate community from Reno. And we did. We went to Ascuaga's seafood restaurant and gambled until 5:00 a.m. If I remember correctly, I won nine dollars, and Jon lost twelve dollars. [laughter] He took me back to Louis' and threw me on the airplane.

(Since I teach a Basque culture class at UNR, Louis Erreguible, the owner of Louis' Basque Corner, comes every semester that I offer it and talks to my students about his experiences emigrating from Maule in Xiberoa in 1948 and about Basques in the American West from his point of view. Then we all eat together at Louis' Basque Corner, and Louis and Lorraine, his wife, eat with us. One thing my Basque culture students learn is the word "commensality," because anyone who studies and works among the Basques knows how important the experience of eating together is.)

I did my fieldwork in Santazi, which is right on the border with Nafarroa and (to the north and east) with Béarn. I was interested in studying the local institutions, ritual practices, the religious life, and the importance of the first-neighbor institution. The shepherding syndicates were really interesting to me, because I knew that they were organized in a very systematic way. So my thesis was a local study of that mountain commune. The fieldwork was conducted over a period of about a year and a half, during which I always lived with a local Basque family.

When I first arrived, the first people I asked to help with accommodations didn't have any room in their farmhouse. But the second family I asked, with the help of Txomin Peillen—who is very well known in Iparralde for his own scholarship and

has a weekend house in Santazi—agreed to help me. I didn't want to say, "Please, would you like to put me up for a year?" So I just said, "I'm looking for accommodation for a couple of weeks."

The family wanted to know, of course, what I wanted and why I was there. Having worked in Ireland, where people were very suspicious of me and of one another, I braced myself for a similar experience among the Basques, and I could not have had a more different reception. They were direct in their questions to me. I told them I wanted to learn their dialect of Basque, their customs, their way of life, and to live with them rather than among them. The family took me in and said I could eat with them and work alongside them every day. But initially I slept in the woman's sister's abandoned house, which was next door. It had running water and a bed. I slept there for two weeks, and then they took me to the house and gave me a room of my own.

I went back the first winter, and I helped kill nine pigs. Each pig takes three days, so that's twenty-seven days of pig killing. I also helped them with the maize harvest, hay making, milking sheep, milking cows, and I also herded them. I just did whatever people did on the farm. Then in 1978 I got to know another family at the other end of the valley, and that's the family with whom I stay whenever I go back.

I finished my thesis in early 1979 and got my doctorate from the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford University. In those days we had to do a first-year postgraduate diploma, which entailed a tutorial once a week, and then we had six papers as set examinations at the end of it.

I became an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Basque Studies very soon in my career. In 1979, I taught at Oxford University for one year as a temporary lecturer in ethnology, in the Pitt-Rivers' Museum, and then I taught social anthropology at Oxford Brooks University, which was a former polytechnic. I became a full-time university administrator in 1983. I took up my academic appointment at UNR in 2002. I spent thirteen years as Oxford University's head administrator in continuing education, which was entirely administrative.

This year is my thirtieth anniversary of having been to Santazi for the first time. During all that time, I kept in touch with my friends and family in Santazi, and I went back every year to see

them. I didn't do any more fieldwork, but when I was there, I always took notes to keep abreast with what was happening in the community.

Certainly, I have seen a lot take place. I have seen entire households evolve and develop—the older generation die off, the people I knew as children grow up, marry, and have children of their own. I've had a unique opportunity as an anthropologist to do that, because so few of us are able to keep in touch like that.

When I first went there in 1976, they didn't have roads to all the farmhouses, and my family had to transport all of their materials, their groceries, everything, by mule from the valley to their house way up in the mountains. The roads were completed soon after I arrived. There were two telephones—one in the post office and the other in the town hall—in the entire valley, which is about eleven miles long. There were probably about 360 people, well over 120 households. People were still cultivating the land with teams of oxen and mules, and very few people had cars.

By the middle of the 1980s, people began to enjoy European Union subsidies for agriculture, and by the 1990s my family's farm had become quite prosperous. They had three Lamborghini tractors. That family is probably among the most successful of all the households and the most traditional, as well, in their views about Basque culture. They now have well over 400 animals, which is a *huge* number. Most households in the 1970s only had between 30 and 50 sheep in their flocks.

The shepherding syndicates still exist, but most of them don't function the way they used to. The children in my household now have computers, but at one point there was great resistance. They got their computers two years ago, and the father, who's now in his mid-forties, was very much against this. The grandmother and the mother managed to get used computers, and the girls now use them in school.

The population has decreased, and there are probably only 100 citizens now, so there are a lot of abandoned farms. They're still, like elsewhere in Xiberoa, opposed to outsiders buying property there, because they have a very special attachment to that socio-physical space. It's a different way of life in some respects, but in other ways it hasn't changed, because those people are still up at five o'clock in the morning. They work seven days a week, and they don't have holidays. Culturally, my

family is extremely proud and hard working, and they love their way of life. A lot of rural people haven't been attracted at all to that way of life. My household is probably an exception, rather than the rule.

It's very hard there. If you're not a shepherd and a farmer, there is no employment to speak of in the mountain commune, so you have to seek work in the lowlands, in a factory or an office. A lot of the young people, as they did in the past, don't want to stay and inherit a farm. They sometimes find work in Baiona, but they tend to stick closer to home than in prior decades, when they tended to go to Paris. The rate of immigration to the Americas has been very low, especially since the First World War. At the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth, many Xiberoans immigrated to Montevideo. But unlike Baigorri, for example, not many Xiberoans came to the States, although there are many northern Basques in Gardnerville. The Lekumberri family in Gardnerville is, in fact, from Xiberoa originally.

There are definitely cultural differences between the north and south of the Basque Country. Some may not like to hear that, but I think both sides have been influenced respectively by Spanish and French cultures. That's unavoidable. On the northern side, French is the dominant language. In many parts of the south, Spanish is dominant. The town of Maule in Xiberoa is a particularly interesting case, because 50 percent of the people are of Spanish origin and descent or Southern Basque, and 50 percent of the people still speak Spanish. So it's kind of an interesting mix of Basque speakers, French speakers, and Spanish speakers there.

The northern side is much more rural than the south, but there are some similarities with rural parts of Hegoalde, as well. The north has a different feel to it. It's a different way of going about things, and, of course, I worked in a province that regards itself as a little bit different. They are Xiberotarrak [those from the province of Xiberoa]. They have some rather unusual ideas about southern Basques and about anybody who's not native Xiberoan. [laughter]

Having lived in Donostia for three years, I found that the rhythm of life there was different. In the south, you socialize in the streets, in public places, and you tend not to go to people's houses. In the north, it's the opposite. That's a different universe. I try to address *subtle* differences between northern and southern

Basque society in the Basque culture class at UNR, but it's hard to pinpoint them.


Donostia-San Sebastián: the first USAC program

My interest in study abroad began when I was nineteen. In the early 1970s, I didn't want to go abroad with other American students, so I designed my own study abroad program. I went to the Outer Hebrides and lived there for nine months. It was the first time that I became interested in foreign cultures and foreign languages. I went off by myself with a backpack and a sturdy pair of boots, and I didn't know a soul. I had a real appreciation of what study abroad can do for an individual, because that experience for me was absolutely central to the person I became.

The Basque Studies Summer Session Abroad Program was instituted in the mid-1970s, I think. UNR collaborated with Boise State University, with Pat Bieter at BSU and Jon Bilbao here at UNR. I know they stayed in Oñati, and I think that was the genesis of USAC.

During the summers of 1980-1982, I was Jon Bilbao's assistant. We ran the Basque Studies Program summer study abroad sessions in the Basque Country, in both north and south. We were mainly based in a seminary facility in Ustaritz. I also taught a course on Basque culture.

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The campus is located in the picturesque city of Oñate, Spain. The area is situated fifty miles from the border of France and fifty miles southeast of the industrial city of Bilbao. Oñate is a city of ten thousand bilingual citizens, speaking both Basque and Spanish. It still retains much of the charm of the Basque culture and its proud people. This unique opportunity to study and grow while living among the Basque people provides the student with the normal academic credit for the two semesters.

Photo courtesy Ray Hemmel



"The Basque Studies summer session abroad program was instituted in the mid-1970s . . . I know they stayed in Oñati, and I think that was the genesis of USAC." Boise State University's 1975-1976 Oñati program brochures.



Some faculty and students of the Basque Studies Program 1978 Summer Session Abroad. Front row, left to right: María Lourdes Pérez-Zubeldia, María Jesús Pérez-Zubeldia, Maite Falcon Ormazabal, Teresa Baksh, and linguist Rudolf de Rijk. Back row: Ernest Bordagaray, Jon Bilbao, Virginia Chan Jacobsen, Auriane Ugalde, Mary Stubbs, Susie Stubbs, Mitchell Guriador, Darral Yturriaga, Linda Norwood, Josephine Bade, and Elizabeth Larsh Ynez.

Jon Bilbao, whom I loved dearly, needed my administrative skills, because sometimes he would not pay attention to detail. The first summer in Ustaritz everything went smoothly. Then we went to Hegoalde, and we were supposed to be based in Vitoria-Gasteiz. I was on the bus with about seventy-five students, and at the time Jon had a little, tiny Panda car, a Seat. He said, "Sandy, buy them all coffee. I'll be back." He drove off and left us in a roadside café outside Vitoria-Gasteiz.

I said, "Where are you going?"

He said, "I just have to remind myself where we're going." He'd forgotten exactly where the accommodation was located in Vitoria-Gasteiz, which at that time was a small town. So three

hours later, by which time the students were rather upset about what was going on, Jon returned, and he said, "Follow me."

So we followed him into Vitoria-Gasteiz. At that time my Spanish was, certainly, rudimentary, and the bus driver was *furious* with me, because Jon kept going down one-way streets, the wrong way. We couldn't lose him, because in those days we didn't have cell phones, and I didn't have any idea where we were going. We were going down these one-way streets the wrong way, and the students were half entertained and half horrified. Finally, we arrived at the facility, which was actually one of Franco's old army barracks, and there were *gitanos* [gypsies] camped outside the grounds. The students looked at me and said, "This is where we're going to stay?"

I said yes. There were problems. The facilities were unisex! We nearly had a mutiny. Jon was completely lovable and frustrating at the same time, because he would not always pay attention, and then he'd end up getting into trouble. He'd just shrug and smile and say, "It's all right." [laughter]

And I would get uptight and say, "Well, I'm not sure it's all right!"

He'd say, "Don't worry."

I remember Jon putting me in a room with the students saying, "You go handle it. I'll talk to the director and see if I can get us out of this reservation. You just try to prevent a mutiny."

Jon was charming, but if you had problems and you had students wanting to mutiny on you, it got a bit worrisome at times! [laughter] He was a good friend, and we all know that Bill and Jon's friendship was also very close.

I prevented a mutiny. Some of the older students rallied to help Jon and me. We promised them that we would move the group as



Left to right: Sandra Ott, Bob Laxalt, and Jon Bilbao, attending the presentation of Laxalt's Tambor de Oro award in 1986.

soon as we could. So we scoured the countryside, and, of course, because it was July, everything was booked. We finally found accommodation in an old spa, which no longer exists, in the town of Urberuaga, and the students adored it. It was great fun. It was really an adventure.

As a result of that, in 1982, after the summer school was over, Bill Douglass rang me in England to see if I would be interested in being the first director of the newly created University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium in Donostia under Carmelo Urza. He knew that I had had experience in solving problems. After consultation with my then husband, I agreed to serve as the first director and did that for three years, until 1986. The first program of which I was director was in August 1983. Those early summer programs were the beginning of the consortium idea.

For me, there were two important things. One was the *convenio* between the University of the Basque Country, UNR, and Bill Douglass. Gregorio "Goio" Monreal and I had met in the summer of 1982, and I think that was his first year as *rector* of Euskal Herriko Unibersitatea [University of the Basque Country]. From the very beginning we owed Goio a huge debt of thanks, because he managed to get our facilities organized.

My second concern was getting students accommodation with local families, because we certainly encouraged people to stay the full year in order to benefit fully from the language instruction. But some of the students were uncomfortable with that and were content to live with other Americans, so we also accommodated that.

We were a very small outfit. I was responsible for all aspects of the program and representing Carmelo's office in Donostia. I'm not even sure that he had a secretary back then. I also taught the Basque culture class. We didn't yet have the *convenio* worked out with the Basque University, and Goio was doing his best to help make arrangements for us. I didn't have any office or phone, and I had all the students' books in the trunk of my car. My first office was my car!

I remember sitting in my car writing checks to pay the bills. I cycled down to Telefónica [the Spanish public telephone company] every morning for about three months, begging them to get me a phone. Again, it was Goio who helped me. Today USAC is one of the largest study abroad programs in the world,

with excellent facilities. We started off roughing it a little bit because we had to. So times have changed.

Félix Menchacatorre and Patricia “Pat” O’Connor, were among our first faculty. They both taught Spanish language and literature, and they succeeded me when I left in 1986 to take up a job at Ithaca College. Judith Whitenack, from UNR’s Foreign Languages and Literatures Department, was in Donostia the third year I directed the program. Eli Areizaga and Francisco “Paco” Caballero are still with the program. I hired Eli in 1984 to teach Spanish. I found her through the College of Education. Alan King taught Euskara for one year, and then we got involved with HABE [the Basque government’s Basque Language Department] to teach Basque. Jon Bilbao taught a Basque history course, and some of his students would say to me, “Dr. Ott, can you help? Professor Bilbao is fascinating, but sometimes in the middle of a lecture he starts speaking in Spanish and forgets that he has to talk to us in English.” [laughter]

So I’d have to grab Jon and say, “Jon, you just gave half that class in Spanish.”

He went, “What?”

Bill Jacobsen also taught in the program. Baleren Bakaikoa taught a course in Basque in economics, and he’s still in the Facultad de Derecho [Faculty of Law]. Luis Mokoroa and his wife, Arantzazu, are still involved with USAC in Donostia. Luis was involved from the very beginning in our one-credit Basque cooking course. They’re still using the same *sociedad* that we used. That kind of continuity with those people has been very instrumental in making USAC a success, because they understand the needs of American students. I have many longstanding friends from the USAC program.

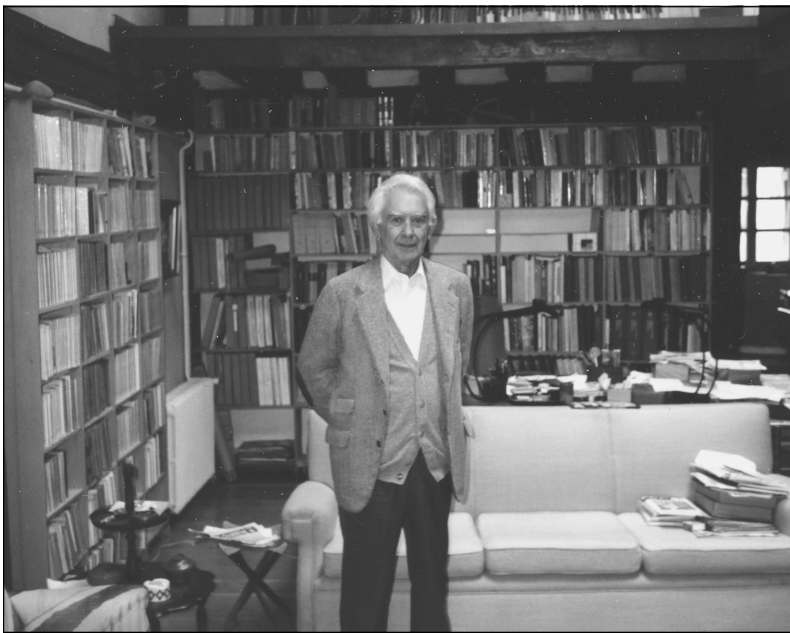
Jon continued to teach for the USAC program after I left in 1986, and I think he was pretty active until he retired to his house in Getxo. He always had a really close interest in the program. I can’t remember exactly when his involvement ended. I saw a lot of Jon when he was working in Sancho el Sabio in Vitoria-Gasteiz. That was the summer when I was doing fieldwork in Aramaiona. I’d always call his house and see him. I miss Jon!

In 1983, Goio gave me his own office in the Facultad de Derecho, because he worked on the Leioa campus, near Bilbao. So that was our base and where I had meetings with the faculty.

I was usually up and in the office before the local people were, as they tended to sleep in more than I did.

I lived in the neighborhood of Antiguo for two years, and in the third year I stayed in Gurutz Jáuregui's flat in Amara, because Gurutz was at Oxford University as our first Basque Visiting Fellow. (Colleagues at Eusko Ikaskuntza liaised with me at Oxford to recruit and select the fellows. That program is still in place at St. Antony's College, Oxford.)

During the 1980s Donostia was not the cosmopolitan place it is today. It was smaller, and I had one of the few bicycles in town. I cycled between my apartment and our offices in the Law Faculty. I remember Basque farmers coming into town with their ox-drawn carts to go to the markets. I often saw shepherds and their flocks along the main boulevard in Antiguo. At the time, Donostia had a sense of faded glory. A lot of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings that have now been renovated were in disrepair. There were derelict factories in the middle of town, so the whole setting has changed dramatically.



"I'd always call his house and see him. I miss Jon!" Jon Bilbao's private library at his residence in Getxo, December 1992.

On the first Donostia program in 1983-1984, there were twenty to thirty of us. We met in Madrid, stayed in Hondarribia for the first orientation, and then moved to Donostia. The University of the Basque Country was not as well off as it is now, and we had very modest accommodations. (When I go to Donostia now, I'm so struck by the opulence of the facilities. It's good to see that progress has been made on so many fronts.)

The students were all good sports, because we didn't have a proper classroom. Everybody was good natured about it. Our first classroom, which was later torn down was actually in Zorroaga. It was pretty dismal, grim, and primitive. We had a room without any windows. It was freezing cold, and I think we had to get a gas heater. [laughter]

I appreciated my USAC students even more when I went to London to direct Ithaca College's study abroad program for three years, because the Ithaca students really wanted the whole thing on a platter. They were far less adventuresome. They didn't really want to learn a foreign language, and they spent most of their free time going to Amsterdam and Paris. They were tourists rather than students of other cultures. They went to London to go to the theater and be close to European capitals. I found the students from the American West much more ready to take on a challenge, and they also went abroad for a very different reason.

I remember taking USAC students out in the countryside and going on pilgrimages with local people. When I helped Jon Bilbao direct the summer programs and then the USAC program, I always took my students to Santazi to meet my family. I took them to Aramaiona, too, where I also knew local people. I got them in the field, introduced them to shepherds, and they watched cheese-making. Our students really had a taste of local culture.

I also took a number of our students to see their families. Many had Basque relatives. I often spent weekends with the students and their kin. I translated for the students until they were fluent enough to communicate adequately with their families. One of my former students, Annie Bidart, has her own consultancy in Reno. I ran into her at the art museum in 2002, after all those years. She said, "Sandy, I'll always be grateful to you. You took me to Baigorri to meet my aunt and uncle. I was mad at you because I was so frightened, but you said, 'You can do it!' And I did! You helped me realize that a lot of things were possible."

I think that's one of the points of studying abroad. Young people not only learn about different cultures. If they're Basque Americans, they also discover their own family heritage. They also discover a lot about their capabilities and do things they never dreamt they could do. I put Annie Bidart in touch with her roots in a very poignant way, and I know that the same happened to Kate Camino and her sister Marguerite, too, with their relatives.

I also took one young man to Baigorri, I think, or Banka, and he was scared to death. We tried to find his grandmother's farmhouse. I had to go to the town hall and help him with some genealogical information. I talked to the mayor, and I finally found the farm. We went up to the farm, and he said, "You mean you just go to the farm?"

I said, "Yes!"

"Well, it's enough that I just take a picture of the farmhouse."

I said, "No, no. You've got to meet your family."

I pushed, dragged, and shoved him, and we went to the farmhouse. There was nobody there. It was one of those big traditional farmhouses. I went, "Ooh-ooh!" like that, as one does in rural Basque society. No answer.

He said, "Really, really, no one's at home! I'll just take a photograph, and we can leave."

I said, "No, no. They've got to be around here somewhere." Then I went "Ooh-ooh!" again, and I heard, "Ooh-ooh!" up on the hillside, where they were making hay. They waved. I waved at them, and they came down to the farmhouse, and I explained in Basque who we were. They just *engulfed* this young man in hugs and kisses, and, of course, we were offered wine and cheese and bread. I translated for them.

Students like him learned that study abroad is not easy. If you really immerse yourself in another culture, it's tough, you know? It's difficult learning another language, and they'd have trouble with the eating hours and the food. One student rang me up at about midnight and said, "My family wants me to eat garbanzo beans, and I don't like chickpeas."

I said, "Well, you just have to adjust. You're abroad, so forget about peanut butter. The reason that you're here is to learn about other people's cultures and ways." In those days you couldn't buy peanut butter in the Basque Country, anyway. That was a big concern for many American students at the time!

The students learned to appreciate that their classroom was also *outside* the classroom. Their university was all around them, because they were participating in a different culture. That was important for them to know. That was the kind of experience that I wanted to bring to my students. For me, an important part of my role as director was to open many avenues so that the young people could meet their families and share their heritage. There are qualities that are irreplaceable in a study abroad experience. Students have to learn how to be independent. That's a big part of the study abroad experience. They would find out so much on their own, too. Kate Camino even teased me last year and said, "You never knew half the stuff we got into."

I said, "Just as well." [laughter]

I always promote the USAC program in my own classes at UNR. Every semester at least three or four of my students have been on one of the USAC programs, and quite a few have been to Donostia. It's really an important part of education, and I wish that we had greater access to funds to help more students have that experience.

During the first two years of my directorship, almost everybody on the USAC program was of Basque descent. Marie Lekumberri, whose family is from Xiberoa, was one of my students. Annie Bidart, the Camino sisters, and Marcelino Ugalde were my students in that first year, 1983.

By the third year, one could see a shift. There was less interest in learning Euskara, and there were more Spanish majors. In subsequent years, the profiles changed again, with a lot of students from Scandinavia, for example. But in the initial years of USAC, the Donostia program was very Basque oriented.

The nature of study abroad has changed over time, and let's face it, the Basque language and culture are of minor interest. There are many more young Americans who want to learn Spanish. That's why the program went more in that direction, simply because that was the target audience. The clientele wanted that.

I also helped set up the USAC program in Pau as a university administrator. I think it must have been my third year when I went and talked to certain people at the University of Pau about the possibility of setting up a program, which became very successful. I lectured to them in 2005, when I was over there doing fieldwork, and I think they had seventy-five students, which was the largest group they'd ever had.

Back in Reno

It was a great pleasure and privilege to come back into academia at the Center for Basque Studies and to pursue the study of a people I've loved for a long time. I have some of my dearest, dearest friends in life in Santazi. So it's a very personal connection and a privilege to be able to do academic work again after so many years as the administrator.

I've just finished a book manuscript on the experiences of Basques in the 1920s-1930s and during the German occupation, and that's under peer review at the University of Nevada Press for its Basque Series. I've become much more of an historian of France as well as an historian of contemporary northern Basque society.

I just gave a paper at a French historical society on gift-giving and the management of justice in Xiberoa. I've been writing about Xiberoa customary law, the longstanding desire among Xiberoan Basques to manage conflict and justice on their own, rather than to allow external authorities to interfere. This is particularly apparent in borderland communities like Santazi.

I received a Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant of \$5,000 from the College of Liberal Arts, which enabled me to go back to Pau during the 2006 Christmas break. My new research project concerns Basque-German relations during the Occupation. Virtually nothing has been written about that, and I found a rather extraordinary series of thirty-nine letters written by a German officer to a female collaborationist in Pau. I haven't figured out yet whether he was in the Wehrmacht [German Army] or in the SS [the Schutz-Staffel, a Nazi elite unit]. In the spring of 1943, that officer toured the grand châteaux of the Loire Valley in Louar. He described his excursion in one letter and also reflected upon the barbarity of the war.

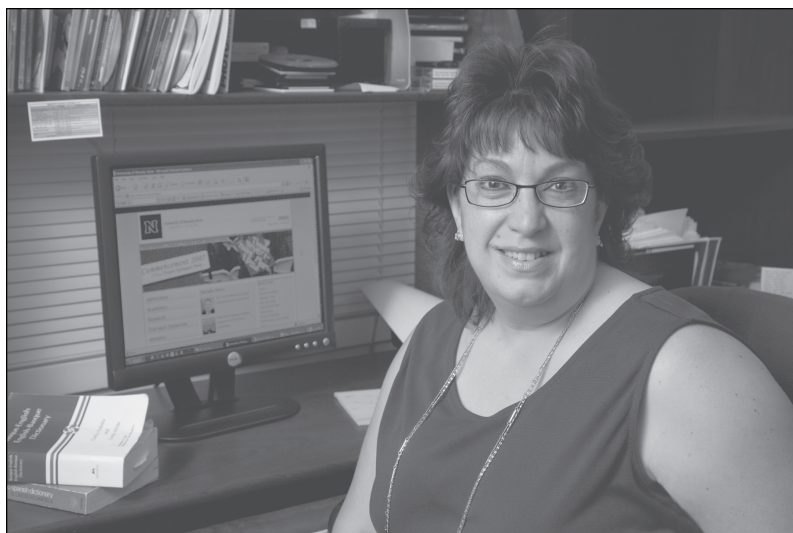
I am also interested in the Breton nationalist movement during the Occupation and its dealings with the Germans. My interest in Iparralde ties in with the story of Eugène Goyeneche, who was very involved in a nascent northern Basque nationalist movement. But at the moment I'm focusing on German-Basque relations and the Nazi officer's letters.

*K*athleen Joan “Kate” Camino, a first generation Basque-American, was born in 1964 in Buffalo, Wyoming. From the University of Wyoming, she received a BA in French and a BA in Spanish in 1988. In 2000, she obtained an MA degree in French at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Kate speaks fluent Basque, French, and Spanish. She has taught Basque at the UNR campus for several years and continues teaching the courses offered online. From 2000 to December 2006, Kate was EITB’s [Basque Public Radio and Television] correspondent for their Web site’s English news edition.

As part of the North American Basque Organizations, Kate was selected as a U.S. delegate and attended the 1999 World Congress of Basque Collectivities in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country, and since 2000 she has been the Zazpiak Bat Reno Basque Club’s dance instructor. In June of 2000, she received a Senatorial Recognition Certificate from Richard Bryan, Nevada U.S. Senator, for her contributions to the Reno Basque Festival Library of Congress Bicentennial Local Legacies Project.

Kate has been employed at the Center for Basque Studies since 1998 and is the Program Assistant/Office Manager. She is



Kate Camino, 2007

currently pursuing an MA degree in education at the University of Nevada, Reno, which she will complete in 2008.

Being Basque in Buffalo, Wyoming

My father, Martin, was born in Arnegi, which is in Basse Nafarroa, right on the border between France and Spain—Arnegi and Valcarlos. My mother's two sisters were also born in Arnegi and came over when they were seven and nine. My grandfather was injured in World War I with mustard gas and had gone home to recuperate and decided he wasn't going to go back to the war, and so he crossed the river that created the border at that time and came to the States, and then seven years later he sent for Grandma and the girls. So my poor Grandma was there for seven years. She used to tell stories about how hard it was. There were no men in Arnegi, and there was one fourteen- or fifteen-year-old boy that would make a circuit of all the farms, trying to help all these women with the livestock and chores.

My grandfather, at that time, had started his own sheep operation in Buffalo, so they moved out to the country immediately. Grandma had to learn how to drive a team of horses and all that kind of stuff, and she'd tell us stories about coming

to town, and she couldn't speak English, so she would pick up Dominica Esponda, who was the wife of John Esponda, one of the most famous Basques in Buffalo. She would accompany her to get supplies, and then they'd drop off Mrs. Esponda, and they'd drive back out to the country. She'd talk about the girls having to run beside the wagon sometimes, because it'd be so cold on the wagon that they'd freeze to death. I can't even fathom what that must have been like for them.

My mother, Florence, was the first in her family to be born in the States, but her first language was Basque. She was actually sent home the first day of school, because nobody could understand her, which broke her heart, because she always talked about how she couldn't *wait* to get into school. Eventually she acquired enough English that she could attend regular school.

In 1962 my parents and their six children—that was before I was born—had traveled to the Basque Country and had gone to the Sanfermines [Pamplona's July festivities], and my mom had taken these movies that were just phenomenal. I remember in second, third, or maybe fourth grade, taking these movies that were on reels—the old 98 mm—and showing them in school.

In 1962 in Iparralde, you can see in these movies that the electricity was coming from the outside of the house, and you could see all the wires, and the *baserris* were completely different from what our houses look like. They couldn't drive up to the family *baserri*, so here's Dad walking up the hill with all these kids, and he's got my sister Marguerite on his shoulders, who was just two. It was really impressive. My mom had great footage of the *encierro* [the running of the bulls in Pamplona] and people running in front of bulls and getting trampled. It's pretty shocking for little American kids to see that kind of thing! It was really startling. [laughter]

I don't know if I really understood much at the time, but I knew my dad and my grandma were born in the Basque Country, but I don't know if I had much more information than that. Nobody had ever been to Europe or had anyone in their family who had ever been to Europe, and it was really unique. And we always talked about the Basque Country, and people asked us, "Where's your dad from?"

"From the Basque Country." I remember individual instances like that, but, I mean, it wasn't like all of a sudden, there's a revelation, "Oh, I'm Basque," because we were always Basque.

My grandmother was always upset because none of us spoke Basque, but she always spoke to us in English. So when I was old enough to respond, I would say, "Why didn't you ever teach us Basque?" Then, she'd speak to me in Basque. It was just something we grew up with, and the Basque language was in our house.

Since it was such a small community, my parents and my grandmother would take turns on Sundays to host all the other Basques. They'd all get together and eat a big dinner and play *mus* until the middle of the night. I remember being annoyed, growing up, and wanting to go to sleep, because it was generally on a Sunday, and I'd have to get up for school the next day, and my parents were downstairs whooping and hollering over a *mus* game. [laughter]

My older sister, Mary—who has passed away—out of any of us, was really interesting to me, because Mary spoke Basque as a child. Then my next sister could understand Basque, but she didn't speak it, and then it went down the line. So by the time I came around, English was the language of choice at home. But when Mary had kids, she really became determined to teach herself Basque again, which she did. She ended up actually marrying a man from Elizondo, and so their son always spoke Basque, too, as a baby and that was, I know, one of her proudest accomplishments. Basque was very important to her, and she was very tied to her culture.

When my parents and my brothers and sisters went in 1962 on that trip to the Basque Country, Mary was fourteen, and it really, really marked her, and she always vowed that she wanted to go back. Unfortunately, she didn't get that opportunity. At that time, she could understand Basque but probably couldn't respond as much, but she really created a bond with a lot of the cousins, regardless if they spoke the same language or not. She was very driven, obviously.

When I was growing up in Buffalo, there wasn't even an organized Basque club until 1980-1981. I didn't think of being Basque as anything special. It was just the way we were. We were Basque, and everybody knew we were Basque. There were a number of Basques in the community, and most of us were related. So I remember as a kid, it was always fun, because you could say, "Oh, yes, you're my cousin, and you're my cousin,

and you're my" We were all related somehow, and that kind of created a bond among us, even though we were barely related in some of the cases. [laughter]

When I was little, they used to have the Basque annual picnic in Buffalo on August 15, and they held it in the mountains at Hazelton, which used to be a trading post, because everybody was in the mountains at the time. They were all sheepherders, and it was easy for them to come.

I was the seventh child, and growing up I was told that you couldn't attend the Basque picnic until you were fourteen, so my parents didn't have to chase kids around, and they could enjoy themselves. I was really amused when my brother who was a little bit younger got to go, but his excuse was that he was an altar boy at the Mass. But us girls didn't go till later on, actually, because it also became too expensive.

Later on there weren't very many people that had sheep on the mountain any longer, and the picnic became a free-for-all, because nobody was charging any admission, and nobody was controlling people coming in or if they were bringing food or booze or anything. It just got out of hand, so they ended up holding it just at the church hall, and it wasn't as big an affair. It was more like a potluck dinner, and then after dinner everybody would play *mus*, and the kids would play around outside. At that time, there weren't any dancers. When my older sister, Mary, came back from California where she had lived for a number of years, she was just saddened that the picnic was no longer held on the mountains, that people had kind of lost interest, and very few people gathered in the church hall.

Mary actually got in touch with Bill Douglass and Janet Inda, who was NABO's president at the time, and she also wrote a grant to the National Endowment for the Humanities to start a Basque club in Wyoming. In 1980 or 1981, Bill came to Buffalo with Janet, and they had a big forum with all the Basque people just to see who was interested. My sister had gone to a tremendous amount work, went through phone books, and had got Basque addresses from all over the state. So initially, members of the Buffalo Basque Club were from all over the state of Wyoming, from Rock Springs and everywhere. To create the Basque club was a huge undertaking for her, but she made it happen.

At that point Mary also started dance instruction. Initially, there were basically two families—three of my sisters and myself and then two of the Maxwells sisters—who comprised the Buffalo Basque Dancers. The first time we performed, we traveled to Salt Lake City for the 1983 NABO convention, which was the summer before I went on the USAC program, or what would be known as USAC later on. It was kind of daunting, because the Oinkaris [Basque dancing group from Boise, Idaho] were there, and we were five girls from Buffalo, Wyoming, and we're having costume changes. When we were going to do *jauzi* dances, we'd all dress as boys, and if we were doing *jotas* or *fandangos*, some would be girls, and some would be boys. We were very amateurish as we didn't know what we were doing, but we really believed in what we were doing. That was really an eye-opener for me.

It was very special, too, because one of my father's brothers came from the Basque Country to visit us. I remember the emotion in his eyes when he saw the San Francisco *klika* [marching band composed of French horns and drums], and all the dancers—including the Oñati dancers, which are part of the Oinkaris, who dance during the Mass, and the Mass was all in Basque. It was really a tremendous affair, and that also bolstered my interest and my pride in being Basque, and then it just kind of went from there.

I really didn't think about being Basque till I was older in high school, because I was the only Basque. [laughter] I remember my friends saying, "Oh, I'm Scottish, and I'm Dutch, and I'm German, and I . . ." or they would have a mix—you still hear people saying, "Well, I'm a quarter Basque, or I'm half Basque, or whatever," and you kind of chuckle.

Both of my parents are Basque, so I was kind of unique in that way, because I would just say, "Well, I'm Basque."

My mother and my father, my sisters, Connie and Marguerite, our cousin, Shirley, who was a cousin on my mother's side, and I went to the Basque Country for the whole summer of 1980. It was my first trip to the Basque Country, and it was the third time that my father has been in the Basque Country after he left.

My father was drafted in the U.S. military and fought in World War II and went back on leave in 1945, and that was the first time he had gone back to his home to visit the family since he

left in 1928. He was in North Africa and in Italy a little bit, too—in the European theater, they called it. It seems it was not necessary to be a citizen to be in the army in those days, and I'm still not clear on how that worked.

Because my father had done his French military service and had served for two years, they automatically made him a sergeant. So he was in charge of a troop, but he didn't speak English. [laughter] It just so happened that there was a man from Montana who was Basque American, and so my father would give the orders in Basque, and the other man would translate them to English. I didn't realize that my father learned most of his English in Texas at the military base. After I was made aware, I paid attention to some of the things that he would say, such as "dowg," and he'd say it with a Southern drawl. But then you understood why.

The second time was in 1962. Since my father was the eldest of his family, the next eldest had taken over the family farmstead and took care of Grandma and Grandpa. My father being the eldest of twelve, when he was twenty-five, there was still a ton of children left to be raised, and his parents were still too young for him to take over. My uncle François wasn't even the next eldest, but he decided that he was going to live in the *baserri*, but that didn't work. He left, and my Uncle Michel, who had married one of the neighbors from the house just adjacent to my father's house, moved in, because my grandfather was still living there and still needed help. My grandmother passed away really young.

So when my father went back in 1962, my mom used to tell the story, Uncle Michel came with his *boneta* [his beret], ringing it in his hands, crying, and my dad said, "What's the matter?"

He said, "Oh, please, please. I have seven kids. You *can't* kick us out." He thought that Dad had come back to reclaim the *baserri*.

And Dad said, "Absolutely not! You guys haven't finalized any paperwork?" So they immediately went down and legally signed it over to my *otto* [uncle], Michel. Now his children are the ones living in the *baserri*.

Before 1980 I had met not the majority, but quite a few of my father's brothers who had already come to the States to visit, but I had never met any of my aunts and, of course, *none* of the cousins outside of two that we had met. It was also a very

emotional visit for my father, getting back with his brothers and sisters.

Having never traveled anywhere, growing up in Wyoming in a pretty sheltered life, we got to the Basque Country, and things were different. I remember getting off the plane and going to my aunt's house. She had prepared this fantastic meal, and we were starving, actually, but we didn't realize that there was a five-course meal. We didn't know anything. So we loaded up on the soup and on the hors d'oeuvres, and then there was fish, and then there was meat. I remember those kinds of things just shocking me. We were all big milk drinkers at that time, and we asked for a glass of milk, and they opened one of those cartons that didn't come out of the fridge. The milk wasn't cold, and it wasn't good. It didn't taste like milk from home, and we were disappointed. [laughter] So we learned to drink Banga, which is like this nasty sugar drink. It is like juice.

The trip was really amazing. It was great to be able to go back with my father and have him show us the house where he was born. We were able to sleep there and imagine all the things that would have gone on when he lived there.

After coming back I decided that I *really* needed to learn Basque, because there's nothing more boring than sitting around one of those dinner tables for six hours in a row and not understanding a word that's being said! [laughter] So that really started my motivation to learn Basque. Despite having so much family and so much history, I couldn't even tap into it, because I couldn't ask any questions. It was just frustrating.

I had a little Spanish, but since my family is from Iparralde, that didn't serve me very well. I did have a couple of uncles that would try and communicate with me in Spanish. There are a number of my cousins—because either their mother was French or their father was French—who didn't speak Basque either. I found out that we're all kind of in the same boat. Some of my cousins were able to speak some English. I felt great frustration at all of these family gatherings, because I couldn't understand Basque or French. My father didn't speak French either, because he had left the Basque Country early enough. He must have spoken some French, but he didn't remember much. I never heard him speak French.

Studying in Donostia

The first time I heard about the Basque Studies Program was in 1977 or 1978, when my sister, Marguerite, graduated from high school. She chose to come to UNR because of the Basque Studies Program. She wanted to learn more about the Basque culture and Basque language. That was her motivation. My parents had somehow already been receiving the newsletter from the Basque Studies Program and knew that it existed at that time.

Then, in the spring semester of 1983, I had just transferred to the University of Wyoming, which was my sophomore year in college, and I saw a poster about studying in the Basque Country through USAC, so I was just bound and determined that I was going to do that program. My sister Marguerite had graduated already with her BA from UNR and was doing graduate studies, and she also heard about the study abroad program, so she was aware of it, too. She decided that if I would go on the program and spend the year in Donostia, she would go. That's when we determined that we could stick it out, if we were together! [laughter]

My grandmother, who was my maternal grandmother and lived in Buffalo, said, "Oh! What a waste of time! You're never going to learn Basque! You'll probably learn some Spanish, maybe some French, but you're never going to learn Basque." They were just convinced that if you didn't learn Basque as a child, there was no way you could learn Basque. At some level it is true, because the more and more I'm around this language, it's pretty obvious there's so much to learn.

In 1983 we started the program with some days in Madrid and the area and toured Segovia and Toledo. It was time to get acquainted with the other kids on the program. There were about twenty-five of us. There were quite a few from Boise, such as Theresa Noble, Rosa Marie Arrubarrena, Tony Ansotegui, and from other parts in Idaho also, such as Janice Mainvil from Weiser and Mike Schultz. (Theresa Noble and Tony Ansotegui ended up marrying men from the Basque Country.)

There were also quite a few from Nevada, such as Marcelino Ugalde from Fallon, Cam Drake from Winnemucca, and also a few from the Reno area, such as Mark Doering, but I don't think

that he was Basque. I don't know if those from Reno were originally from there or if they were just studying at UNR. There were also a couple of older Californians who might have been professors from other consortium universities. I don't know how old they might have been, because I was eighteen, so everybody seemed ancient to me! [laughter]

There was a Joe Jaio, and I always wonder when I'd see Erramon Jaio if there's some connection there, but I don't know. Max Beterbide was from Susanville, or Marysville, maybe—one of those “-villes”—and he ended up staying in the Basque Country. I think he's still there today. Coming from my little sheltered Wyoming life, Andrea, another student, used to scare me to death with her craziness. [laughter] Andrea was a punk rocker from California, and she used to listen to the Violent Femmes. I don't know if she had her nose pierced, but she had some kind of piercing.

There was a couple, Nick and Janny. Janny was somehow related to the Santa Fe Restaurant in Reno, but I don't know what that connection was, and Nick was her boyfriend. There was an Alan, who, I think, was just there for one semester. Then there was Erramon from Chico, and an older gentleman, also Erramon, who, I think he must have been a professor. Diane



Students from the 1983-1984 USAC group in the Keiser Pub in the Basque Country. Kate Camino is sitting, second from the right.

DeChambeau, an older lady, might still be around here. I've heard Carmelo talk about her, so she's still affiliated somehow.

We had a session where we were instructed about safety. If we were walking down the street in the Basque Country and somebody insisted on buying us a drink elsewhere or was trying to get us out of the area, then we better listen, because that was one of the tactics that they used so that innocent people weren't harmed in bomb blasts or whatever. Again, being from Buffalo, Wyoming, it was just completely incomprehensible for me. [laughter] After Madrid we headed to Hondarribia, and we stayed at an *albergue* [youth hostel].

We had intensive Basque language. We had four hours in the morning with native speakers and then four hours in the afternoon with Alan King, who would give us grammar lessons and would clarify and answer questions about what we had learned in the morning. It was tremendously frustrating, and I cried every day, because I just didn't feel like I was getting it. Our only savior was Rosa Marie Arrubarrena from Boise, who grew up speaking Bizkaian Basque, and her whole motivation was to become literate. We were learning *Batua*, but it was kind of more Giputxi [dialect from the province of Gipuzkoa]. The professor would just pull out a pen, for example, and he'd say, "*Hau boligrafoa da* [This is a pen]." So we didn't know if he was saying, "This is a pen," "What's your name?" "I'm so happy to be here." We had no idea.

So Rosa Marie would say, "He's saying, 'It's a pen!'"

Then we'd have to go one by one and repeat what he said. So, "*Hau boligrafoa da*," "*Hau boligrafoa da*," "*Hau . . .*" and "*Hau liburua da* [This is a book]," "*Hau liburua . . .*"

Sandra "Sandy" Ott was the resident director at the time, and Félix and Pat Menchacatorre were instructors, who were newlyweds. (They had just been married on the East Coast somewhere, New Jersey, maybe. They came over in a Volkswagen van which had been shipped over, so that was "trippy.") Alan King was another one of our instructors, and then I believe Jon Bilbao also taught a course on history. Then we had resident instructors for the Basque language from AEK [Basque language teaching association] originally.

We were in this *albergue* for a month, and during that month, I tried to venture out. My sister decided that she better take care of me, but that wasn't at all in my plans. [laughter] I was probably

a little more ornery than I should have been, but I took every opportunity to go out in the evenings and do different things that my sister just wasn't interested in.

Alan King sometimes would take a group of us, and we'd drive to Donostia, and we'd go to the old part there, and we'd try out our Basque. We'd be so proud, because we could say, "*Zenbat da* [How much is that]?" [laughter] It was a great experience, and we were there for the *fiestas* or the *bestak* [festivals], so it was a lot of fun.

During that same time there were tremendous floods in Bilbao and in the old part of Bilbao, and a lot of the kids were evacuated from there and brought to this *albergue*. A lot of the *monitores* [chaperones] were kids of our age, probably in their early twenties, and they took care of all these kids. They befriended a number of us in the program, and we'd get together at dinnertimes, and sometimes we'd have songfests or we'd dance or whatever it might be.

These guys got fake guns, like water guns or something, and ski masks and banged on my sister's door, because my poor sister didn't spend too much time outside of class, doing a lot of socializing. We were rooming with Annie Bidart, and they were sound asleep. They opened the door, and these guys with hoods on demanded their passports. [laughter] At first, of course, Annie was scared to death but realized who they were and so was lipping off back to them in Spanish, saying, "Ah! You can have my passport, but you don't look *anything* like me. It's not going to do you any good." Of course, my sister was having a cardiac arrest, because she had no idea that this was a joke. So that was one of the more traumatic moments during our stay in Hondarribia.

I happened to be out on the town that night and rolled in way too late—three in the morning or something—and they had locked the door! So, of course, I had to knock on the door to wake them, and my sister cussed me out for an hour and a half because, had I been in bed and the door been locked, this never would have happened! [laughter] Anyway, she decided to socialize a little more after that, which was probably a good thing.

Marguerite and I were kind of unique. We were from the French side, which was unique, because most of the other kids' families were from the Spanish side, from Hegoalde. We knew some of the old songs that a lot of the other kids didn't know, so it was like the

Camino sisters' show sometimes. If we'd go somewhere, they'd make Marguerite and I sing something in Basque.

One day, Jon Bilbao came to the *albergue* with musician Xabier Lete and wanted to know if anyone knew how to play *mus*. They had a *mus* tournament with all the *monitores*, with all these kids that were there from Bilbao, and, of course, we had to participate, because Marguerite and I were the only two that knew how to play *mus*. So we played *mus* with Jon Bilbao and Xabier Lete, which is still just like the day before yesterday, because I was so scared. Xabier Lete called me "Katti Kenua", and my sister was "Marga Muslari". We cheated horribly. We'd just say what cards we had in English, because we were so intimidated by what was going on! [laughter] Of course, they stomped us, because we didn't really know what we were doing.

Then after our month in Hondarribia, we moved to Donostia, and you either moved to your home stay, or a number of the kids on the program got apartments together. So Marguerite and I were taken into the house of Kontxita and Iñaki Olaizola. Their house was a *piso* [a flat] that consisted of four rooms, and that was shocking. We kept thinking that there must be something else behind this door like a corridor that had more rooms, but that was it. [laughter] Marguerite and I shared a bedroom, and the startling thing about that was that Kontxita would lock up the phone. At the time, my mother was very ill, and after pleading and crying and bawling, Kontxita decided that she would leave the phone, so in case somebody would call us from the States, we could answer the phone if she wasn't there. She wasn't there a lot of the time, so that worked out fine.

Once we went to Donostia, we were supposed to start our regular routine of going to school. We were actually going to school at Zorroaga in Amara in Donostia, which was scary in itself. There's an old church, and it had a big "*Nuklearik ez*" [No to nuclear power plants] sign on the side of it. I don't even know for sure who was actually housed there, maybe the faculty of philosophy. They were very rebellious, and they were always having demonstrations and sit-ins and lockouts and one thing or the other. Sandy ended up putting the library books that we most needed in the back of her car, because we could never use the university library.

If you didn't have class, there was really nowhere to go, and you couldn't go to the library or the bar and the cafeteria area.

So it just became difficult, because most of us were kind of hostage in the university. I just remember how I had to walk up this huge hill to go to Zorroaga, and when it was raining, I just got soaked and was miserable. Sometimes we'd luck out, and we'd coincide with Félix and Pat, and they'd load up everybody in the back of their VW van. You'd go at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and you'd stay there all day. It was just like an American routine—you go to school all day long.

USAC ran like the American university system. You chose whatever topics, and your classes would start at different times of the day, just like it does in the U.S. But we always hung out at the *facultad* [faculty building], because that's where everybody was.

It's funny, I barely remember my classes. I was doing both Basque and Spanish, so I would have Basque language, a Spanish literature class, Spanish grammar, and then I had another Basque review class. In the first semester there were twenty of us in Basque and five taking Spanish classes. In the second semester there were five of us in Basque classes and twenty in Spanish class. [laughter] The five of us that remained were all those who had had Basque either from our parents or our grandparents, so it was very close. A lot of the others hadn't had Basque in their households, and they didn't have the exposure, and that was just kind of the conclusion I came to. For some of us the Basque language was still in our ear, because we heard it all the time at our house with my grandmother and so on.

In the second semester Alan King took advantage of those small numbers, and we did some linguistics courses, and we did a *great* exercise. Each one of us had a tape made from our homes. So, we asked our mom to hide a tape recorder in the kitchen when Grandma was over, so we could just record a conversation. Then when it came back, we had to transcribe it, and we were trying to determine if the Basque had evolved. Is the Basque in Buffalo the same as the Basque in Arnegi, or had it changed in some way? So it was really cool.

I remember the first time I wrote a postcard home in Basque how good that felt and how excited my parents were to get that and their reaction. Then I felt like, "Oh! Hallelujah! this is so wonderful," when we got that tape that had my mom, my dad, and my grandmother, and they were all speaking Basque, and I

was able to understand it—not fluently, not everything, but pretty much.

As part of this linguistics course, we were also to record some Basque in Arnegi. In 1983 my family still had an open fire, and in the evenings everybody would sit around the fire, and my aunt would knit, and my cousin would read and whatever people did around the fire and chitchat. So we did some recordings then in order to have examples of the Arnegi Basque.

It's funny now to go back after obtaining more Basque and being able to understand those tapes more fluently. "Oh, how stupid they must have thought we were." At one point we listened to a tape and realized that my family was trying to ask Marguerite questions, but she didn't understand that they were talking to her, and she wasn't responding! [laughter] Well, neither one of us were, so I wasn't much help either.

The first semester I also took Sandy's anthropology class, and that was the first time I had ever seen Joseba Zulaika ranting and raving with big, bushy, black hair. As part of the program there were some outings, some extracurricular activities that were organized depending on the courses that you were taking. For instance, Sandy took her class to see how sheep cheese was made, so some students spent a weekend with some shepherders.

It became obvious that we couldn't continue at Zorroaga, and we moved to Derecho [Faculty of Law building] completely on the other side of the city, and it was great. We did our coursework, and we were very, very fortunate, because we had teachers that came to Derecho to teach us Basque, and Alan was also there. So for a time we continued the same routine. We'd be with a native speaker in the morning and then with Alan in the evening or in the afternoons.

USAC was set up very close to the American system. The only difference, though, was that in Donostia, we had the opportunity to dance with Argia [a dance company], which was phenomenal. So Monday nights we would have dance lessons with Argia at the Museo de San Telmo [San Telmo Museum] in Donostia, which was like a dungeon, and the floor was cracking. That was also daunting, because here I was next to Argia dancers, and I was coming from my poor Buffalo Basque dancing roots. [laughter] But we held our own, and we did all right. We never performed or anything, but it was a great experience.

Our dance teachers were Joxe and Fernando. Joxe Mendiola's son, Oier, was in Reno and did the music camp, Udaleku [NABO's annual children program], with us in 2002. I've had the opportunity to see them a couple times since, and that's just been great.

We'd go to dance, and then afterwards we'd go to this bar in the old part called La Cepa and have *mixto* [mixed] sandwiches and Coca-Cola. [laughter] They had rounds of cheese the size of this office, and they'd lob off chunks of it, and then they'd make *mixtos*, and you eat either *mixto serrano* [mixed cured ham] or *mixto jamón York* [mixed fresh ham] sandwiches. That was as close to a ham sandwich from home as we had ever found, and that was our favorite thing to do after dance. That was a whole ritual.

My sister and I did perform for Pentecost in Arnegi, which was really kind of cool, but it was very intimidating, because everybody was watching us. You would hear them, "Oh. *Amerikano horiek* [those Americans]," or, "*Martinen alabak* [Martin's daughters]." They didn't know our names individually, but they knew that we were Martin's daughters or we were the Americans. I remember feeling so bad, because I didn't know how to *entrechant* [click my heels], and so *everybody* noticed that I couldn't do it properly. [laughter]

Then we also had cooking class at the Sociedad Gastronómica with Luis Mokoroa. We also had a course from Juan Mari Arzak who taught us how to cook some kind of sparrow, some kind of bird. And, of course, you can imagine Marcelino [Ugalde] . . .

When I look back at it, it's kind of a shame, because I was so out of touch. I didn't know Arzak from anything. So we're sitting, goofing off, and not paying attention. A cooking class for me was kind of that, because I've never really been interested in cooking. But the highlight was that you got to eat what you cooked. How many people have had a personal cooking lesson by Arzak? What a bunch of dumb goofs I hung out with. [laughter] But that was an excellent experience, really, and I know my sister, who is four years older than me, had a little more appreciation and a little more sense of what was going on around her than I did.

We were such a phenomenon that EITB was always there trying to interview us. I remember Bingen, who used to have a cooking show, came to interview these Americans at the Sociedad. And at this table there must have been fifty people, and my

sister and I were sitting across the table from each other. The TV camera stopped at us, and they said, "What is your favorite dish in the Basque Country?" So I didn't even know what to say, and they said, "Oh, well, you can say 'hamburger,' if you want."

I thought, "I'm not going to say hamburger!" I had that much sense. [laughter] So I was going to say *babarrunak* [beans]. Well, you think I could get *babarrunak* past my lips when the TV camera's rolling? Hell, no! It was just ridiculous! We, my sister and I, actually, were on TV a lot, and I don't know why that was. It seemed like we were singled out. They also filmed us at the *albergue* in Hondarribia when we initially got there.

As time went on, almost every weekend my sister and I would go to Arnegi and spend time with the family. So that was really interesting, too, because we would try and use the Basque that we had learned, and then they would say, "No. Here we say it like this"

I would go around the house with my cousin's wife, Marie Claire, and say, "How do you say this?" So I actually created an Arnegi dictionary. So that was very helpful, too, because some of the variations were extreme, so it was good to have that as a backup.

It was also a great opportunity, too, because we never had any exposure to my *mother's* family from the Basque Country. So we were able to go back to my grandma's *baserri*, which is just not very far from my father's *baserri*, and meet the people that lived there. At that time my grandmother still had a brother living in the *baserri*. That was really neat, too.

Also, as part of Marguerite's graduate work, she had worked out a project with Bill Douglass to do our family tree for graduate credit. So after we got a little bit of Basque under our belts, we would go to the town hall, and they'd just let us into the records, which was great. So we were able to see our parent's birth certificates and things that were just outrageous to us like Grandma being born in eighteen-hundred something. Marguerite completed a huge family tree and took advantage of being there and going house by house, so we ended up knowing all the aunts' and uncles' kids and all their kids' kids.

As I said, we mostly, on the weekends, would go stay with somebody from our mother's family or our father's family, as did most of the kids that had immediate family—aunts and uncles. Then we'd come back and trade stories about all the silly

stuff that happened because we couldn't communicate with our relatives.

I guess different things happen when you go abroad, and all you have is yourself to survive! For example, Joe Jaio went into a store because he wanted to buy some olives and ended up buying two kilos of olives, because he didn't know how to talk himself out of having ordered two kilos of olives! [laughter] And, you know, mistakes trying to order beer. "*Bi cerbeza bat* [Two beer]" was one of our big jokes, that somebody tried to say in a bar sometime, and just silly stuff like that.

We had an instant in our house that was a lot stupider. Marguerite and I came home one night late and went to wash our faces, and there was no hot water. Right at the door of our apartment building there were national policemen on both sides, and that was something to get used to, too. You're not used to walking by guys with machine guns very often, and so we were always nervous around those guys. It worked out very well for Marguerite, because she'd always say, "Well, go ask Kontxita what happened." So Marguerite didn't have to worry about it.

The next morning I went out to Kontxita, and I tried to say in my broken Basque, "Gosh, you know, we came home last night, and there was no water."

She went, "Oh, yes. *Bu-la-la-la-la. Bomba.*"

I said, "*Zer* [What]?"

"*Bu-la-la-la-la. Bomba.*"

And I said, "Oh, my goodness!" I went in, and I told Marguerite, "There was a bomb. That's why there was no water. That must be why the national police were here." And my sister was already packing her clothes. She was *so* out of there, scared to death, and I think when Kontxita'd obviously realized that we were kind of panicking, she got her Spanish-English dictionary and showed me *bomba* meant "water pump." There was just a problem with the water pump. [laughter]

Then, actually, some kind of traumatic experiences happened, too, like that year on Santo Tomás [a traditional farmers' market celebrated on the Feast of Saint Thomas, December 21]. We were all in the old part of Donostia for Santo Tomás and checking out all the livestock and everything and, of course, drinking a little bit. They were having *idi probak* [rural sports involving animals] with the oxen, and there were dancers and *txistularis* [flute and drum players].

My sister and I had decided to go home for a while and rest up, because we wanted to come back out that night. So we got home, and we're getting ready to go and got a phone call. It might have been Alan King telling us not to come, because there was a huge demonstration. At that time in front of the *alde zaharra* [old city quarters] in Donostia, there's a big median, a big grass kind of park area—maybe it's still there, but I think it's now *peatonal* [pedestrian area]—and the national police had come in, and there were just rows and rows and rows and rows and rows of their vans.

Some of the people in our group got caught in those riots. Marcelino Ugalde told me, and Tony Ansotegui, too, that all of a sudden all the national police in all their riot gear were shooting rubber bullets and throwing tear gas, and some of our people had no clue what was going on. So those that were together ducked into a bar, and somebody in that bar, I guess, had been throwing something out at the national police from the bar and then hiding back behind the screen. I think it was Marcelino or Tony that told me that the iron screen thing flew up, the doors flew open, and here they were with their machine guns, and they were making everybody get out of the bar, and how *frightened* they were, because they had *no* idea what was going on.

In their estimation, as the people were leaving the bar, the police were getting cockier and kind of taunting the people, like poking them with their guns. So you can imagine all of these poor American kids were scared to death in that situation. Marcelino told me they started running, because Tony actually lived in the *alde zaharra*, and they tried to get to her house, and he felt something whoosh by him, and it landed. I don't know what it hit, some kind of pole or something, and it was a rubber bullet.

Then I know that Mike Schultz, for example, had been stopped and was questioned by a national police, and, of course, he had no language, and Alan King happened upon him. So they threw Alan and Mike in one of the vans for a time.

It was just a great group of people, and we hung together for most of the time. We got along really well, and we still see each other on certain occasions, like in Jaialdi in 2005. Marcelino is great, because Marcelino has kept in contact or knows the whereabouts of most of the Nevada people, and then we see mostly the Idaho people.

I knew a lot of people who were marked seriously by the USAC experience and have gone back a lot to the Basque Country or have become leaders in their Basque communities and part of their Basque clubs. For example, in Boise, there are a million organizations that you can become involved in, and most of those people have become involved in those organizations or have continued in USAC in some capacity. Marcelino and I both ended up at UNR, and it was fun to reminisce with him about the things that happened that year in Donostia.

USAC gave me another opportunity to be with my family, from both my father's and my mother's sides. It was a tremendous, tremendous learning experience, and whatever Basque we came home with was way more than anybody had anticipated. So that was a great feeling. It also made me aware that a lot of people in my family and many of my cousins didn't speak Basque, and many of them only spoke French. So I decided that I'd better go back and learn French. In 1985, I went back to the Basque Country with my parents, and that was actually the last trip I was able to take with my parents. It was wonderful, because I could understand Basque. We could sit around a table, and I could converse with my family.

We got to take our parents back and show them where we lived in Donostia, and they got to meet Kontxita and Iñaki. We actually stayed at the María Cristina Hotel in Donostia. Of course, at the time it cost about a buck fifty to stay there, because the exchange was still so wonderful—the wonderful world of *pesetas* [the Spanish currency prior to the Euro]. It was before the hotel was renovated, so even though it was really high end, it still wasn't what it is today.

Studying in Pau

I was studying in Laramie, at the University of Wyoming, when I heard that Carmelo had recently established a USAC program at the University of Pau. So, in 1986, I went to Pau for the first time as an undergraduate on the USAC program, to study French for foreigners. This was another terrific experience and a lot different than my Donostia experience. Of course, I was a little bit older, and I was with students from Denmark, Norway, Germany, Spain, and from all over Europe, and Morocco, too.

There was some confusion about my housing situation, so I was fortunate to live with Christine Gazaniol's family, who was the resident director of the Pau program at the time. She'd found all the housing and mediated problems and things like that. They lived right across from campus, and that was great.

Unfortunately, that was the year my dad died. I got a call in November and came back to the States from Thanksgiving till just into the New Year. After my dad passed away, then I went back and finished my studies in Pau.

Then, Carmelo made me aware that Michel Inchauspe from Donibane was giving grants for students to go back and do graduate work at the University of Pau. I applied for a grant, and I got it, and that was all because of Carmelo. So had I not gone in 1983, I wouldn't have met Carmelo, and so he never would have let me know about this opportunity.

After I graduated from the University of Wyoming, I went back to Pau in the fall of 1988 to do graduate work. This was a much different situation, because I didn't have the USAC support, and I had to find the classes, and I was just like a regular college student. That was really difficult. I had hoped to continue with my Basque language program in Pau, but I was put in a four- or five-year *maîtrise* program in French, with Sebastian, a guy who had also gotten the same grant. This *maîtrise* class had been together for the last four years, and all of the sudden, these two Americans came in, like on the fourth year, and we weren't very well received. Our French probably wasn't at that level either, *but*, I mean, there wasn't really an alternative. These lousy *maîtrise* classes ate my lunch. [laughter] It was horrible.

Then I did seek out some other Basque options, so I had a great conversation course with Txomin Peillen from Euskaltzaindia. Then there was another linguistics course I had, too, but I can't remember who the teacher was. He was from Canada, because he taught it mostly in French, but I know we spoke English in that class.

However, studying at Pau was still a great experience, and it offered me another opportunity to be there and see my family, spend time with them, and strengthen my Basque. A lot of my family on my mother's side, they kept telling me, "Oh! You're wasting your time! And why do you bother with Basque? Basque isn't going to take you anywhere, and you need to learn French."

I'd just nod my head, and I'd say, "Personally, it's important to me to be able to speak to these people."

"Well, you could speak to them in French."

I'd say, "Ah, whatever."

So during that year, I was kind of being on my own and thoroughly enjoying it too much. I had the big exam at the end of the year in May, so I didn't pass. There were like forty of us in that class, and in the first round, only six passed out of the forty. [laughter] So I didn't feel so bad, and the other American guy didn't pass that round either. But then, it was like, "You either go home, or you stay and then retake it in the fall."

I'd burnt through my grant, and I was in tough shape. I had made a lot of friends my first year in Pau, so I was fortunate enough to have a place to stay. I ended up working as a maid that summer in Lourdes, and then at night I would wash dishes at a Mexican restaurant in Pau, so I could stay the summer and survive. It was just insanity, when I think about it now. [laughter]

After the summer, I worked in a *baserri* owned by a Bearnais man [from the French province of Béarn]. It was room and board in trade for cooking and cleaning. Because I was Basque, he just assumed that I knew all the ways of the *baserri*, that I knew how to run the animals and do the planting and all that kind of thing. Poor guy, he was kind of disappointed, initially, but we got along OK.

Then it was getting close to September, and I thought, "Gosh, I haven't studied a lick." I retook the exam in the fall and did not pass. It was like October when I went back to Arnegi to say good-bye to my family and to a boy from Buffalo who had just gone to a *barnetegi* [Basque-language school] in Lazkao to learn Basque. He was at his family's house in Lasa, and he had Mary Bieter with him from Boise. Mary said, "Oh! Well, what are you doing?"

I said, "I don't know what to do. I guess I have to go home and find a job."

She said, "We really need a teacher at the Lauro Ikastola just outside of Bilbao, if you're interested."

So instead of coming back home, I started as an English teacher at the *ikastola*, which was another daunting experience but a wonderful one and an opportunity to reinforce my Basque. I did that for that school year, and I came home in the summer of 1990 and then returned to Lauro the next fall of 1990, and I

ended up staying until February of 1991. That was when my oldest sister, Mary, passed away.

I came back to Buffalo, and my sister Mary had been serving as the dance instructor pretty much in Buffalo until the time of her death, so I filled her vacancies. I took over the dance group, and I became the NABO delegate for the Buffalo Basque Club, while serving on the board of directors. I got very involved in the Basque community there and enjoyed it immensely, because I could practice my Basque, and I just felt like I was learning so much from the immigrant Basques in Buffalo and how they spoke.

The Center for Basque Studies: like night and day

It became very clear, very soon that I couldn't make a living in Buffalo. My sister, Marguerite, after graduating from UNR, ended up marrying in Reno and never left. She kept saying, "Why don't you come to Reno? Come to Reno, get your master's in French and your teacher's certification, and you can become a teacher, and there're just a lot more opportunities than in Buffalo, and that's what you should do." My mother had passed away by that time, and I moved to Reno in August of 1997, and I enrolled as a graduate in the French program to do a master's.

During that time, I had come to the Basque Studies Program to visit Marcelino a couple of times. After my first semester in Reno a Basque friend that I had met when I was going to school in Montana called me one day and said, "Are you going to apply for that job at the Basque Studies Program?"

I said, "What job's that?"

She said, "Oh, yes. They're looking for someone." This was January of 1998, and I applied for the job and was hired as a student worker at the program in January of 1998, which was serendipitous, because that was also when they were organizing this tremendous conference [Basques in the World: Migration, Identity, and Globalization, July 6-9, 1998]. They were bringing seventy-two scholars from all over the world to present on topics in Basque studies. So it was fast and furious.

I remember my first day at Basque Studies. They hadn't had coverage, for example, for the phones for so long that Jill Berner and Linda White loved me. I wasn't even sure how to transfer a

phone call or how to do anything, but they were so thrilled that they both left and took a lunch hour together. I just remember being scared to death! So that's how I started. By April they had hired me as a part-time classified, that I still hold today, because I was still doing my master's. (I'm not quite the same rank as I was eight years ago, but the same position, and it's been fantastic.)

When I first started, there was a flurry of activity around that conference, and that was huge. But some of the heat was taken off, because we held it at the Riverboat Hotel and Casino, which belonged to Bill Douglass at the time, so a lot of those kinds of arrangements didn't fall on my shoulders. Besides that conference, we were busy in the summertime with the arrival of new scholars. My job description was typing, and I mostly typed for Bill's publications. He was my first boss at Basque Studies. After the conference I retyped the papers presented for inclusion in the proceedings of that conference. Jill still handled most of the finance end of it, so I did filing, and I was the one that stuffed the newsletter, mailed it, and maintained the newsletter mailing list.



"I remember my first day at Basque Studies. They hadn't had coverage, for example, for the phones for so long that Jill Berner and Linda White loved me." Kate Camino multi-tasking at the Center for Basque Studies office, April 2006.

During my year in Donostia, we all got together for Thanksgiving dinner, and Jon Bilbao, Bill Douglass, and Carmelo Urza joined us. At the time I was so naïve, and I didn't come from Reno, so I didn't know what the Basque Studies Program was or who Bill Douglass or Jon Bilbao or Sandy Ott, from Oxford, were. They were just some more guys to me. [laughter] Then when I started working at UNR, I thought, "Oh, what a dip I was. They must have just thought, 'This Camino could not be more of a hick.'" I had no concept as to who any of these people were.

I remember when Bill first walked into the office and how scared I was, because by that time I had realized what a doofus I had been in 1983. But he didn't really remember me from that time of my life, so that was encouraging. [laughter]

In the meantime, I was elected the secretary of the Zazpiak Bat Reno Basque Club from 1997 to 1998 and then the president from 1998 to 2000. Since then, I have become the club's dance instructor. In 1999, we organized the annual NABO convention in Reno as part of the celebration of our Renoko Aste Nagusia [Reno Basque Cultural Week, July 19-25, 1999]. Roby Yturbide, my vice president, was of great help. We also had the opportunity to honor the organizers of the 1959 Western Basque Festival and Bill, too, as he was going to retire in December of 1999.

Because of my involvement in the Renoko Aste Nagusia, Eusko Jaurlaritza [the Basque government] chose me to attend the World Congress of Basque Collectivities in 1999, which was also when Bill received the Lagun Onari Award. Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe spoke about Bill, and I don't think there was a dry eye in the house, and he was sincere and full of emotion. And Bill cried, and I remember thinking, "How phenomenal, and how phenomenal that I worked for this man, not having a clue who I was around!" [laughter] It's really something. The same thing with Joseba Zulaika, who is world renowned, and Linda White.

You hear over and over how during Franco's regime the Center for Basque Studies was the glimmer, the light at the end of the tunnel. It's really, really remarkable, and I'm really thankful to have had an opportunity to be a part of it, and for being able to be exposed to all of these great people.

Then Bill retired, and Joseba took over, and all hell broke loose! [laughter] All of sudden one of the first big things I took on was the summer film course with Jaume Martí-Olivella, and



The 1999 World Congress of Basque Collectivities United States delegation at the Bilbao town hall. Kate Camino is in the front, second from the right.



Opening ceremony of the 1999 World Congress of Basque Collectivities, Vitoria-Gasteiz. Left to right: Iñaki Aguirre, Bill Douglass, President Juan José Ibarretxe, unidentified person, and Josu Legarreta.

arranging to get films from the Basque Country that he could show, coordinating with the Riverside Theaters and so on. Then I was involved with the whole publications initiative, which meant dealing with a number of individuals for contracts and all the paperwork that it entailed. Then Jill's job description changed and became completely dedicated to publications and the newsletter, so I took on all the financial end of it from that point. I did all the account reconciliations and all the paperwork involved with paying invoices.

At that time, we were just Joseba, Linda, Jill, and I. Joseba initiated this whole online course movement, which allowed professors from the Basque Country to be involved and write courses and textbooks and the whole nine yards. The time and energy that we spent, too, in trying to get those approved through Courses and Curriculum was unbelievable. It involved an incredible amount of paperwork, and the poor photocopier was just blown up. I remember Joseba calling Goreti, his wife, and telling her to bring us lunch, because he was going to help me collate. We had to have thirty copies of each one of those courses, and I don't know how many courses we presented initially, five courses or even more maybe.

We were still next door at the Basque Library, we hadn't moved into the offices yet, and we had piles of paper. We just went round and round and round and then stapled, and round and round and round and stapled. Joseba was right into it, and I was very impressed by that, because he was the director. He shouldn't have been sitting there stapling packets together, but he *was*, because he believed in it. Then it was a terrific effort and boon to the Center for Basque Studies, too, because we're not supposed to be a teaching department, but these online courses just allowed another outlet, another opportunity. Plus, there were only two faculty members at the time, and so it took some of the weight off of their shoulders, so at least we'd have some course offerings, if they could do it online.

Joseba also asked for two additional positions, and I remember preparing that biennium budget and that whole governor's report. I remember sitting here, and Linda's on the floor with papers all around her, and Jill's over here, and we're going through trying to find the history of things, and it was just us. Joseba spent an *immense* amount of time putting that document together. Much to his credit, the name changed from the Basque

Studies Program to the Center for Basque Studies after the initial program review, which was a fabulous benefit to the center, too. The reviewers had nothing but great things to say about us, which obviously helped when they were making this proposition to the legislature to increase our budget. I'll never forget the day when Dean Bob Mead [Dean of College of Arts and Science from 1997-2003] came to the office to tell Joseba that we had gotten the enhancement. He didn't even say anything about two more positions. He just said, "The enhancement."

Mead's seemingly very straight-laced, and the poor man almost fainted because of Joseba's reaction! [laughter] Bob Blesse¹ came from down the hall from the Black Rock Press to see what was going on, because he heard Joseba screaming, and it was just a tremendous, tremendous moment! It was one of those moments that you just wished you had a movie camera, because it was just priceless. Joseba was so happy and clapping, and he was shouting, "Gora Euskadi [Long live the Basque Country]," everywhere. It was wonderful. That was a great moment. He always said it was because of those *cuatro gatos* [four cats], and we did it somehow.



"He always said it was because of those cuatro gatos [four cats], and we did it somehow." Center for Basque Studies faculty and staff, 2000. Left to right: Linda White, Jill Berner, Joseba Zulaika, and Kate Camino.

At the time, Linda was really tired of teaching Basque. She had done it for twenty-five years and was ready to teach some Basque literature courses and some other gender courses or whatever she could, just to vary a little bit. I graduated with my master's in French in May of 2000, so I started working full-time that spring semester. Then I asked them, "Maybe I could teach 101, and Linda could continue with 102, and we could alternate years." Well, the first year we offered the courses simultaneously. I did 101, and she did 203, and I had like thirteen people in 101, which was a record at the time, and that went well. Then the next year, in 2002, the college cut the budget, and they were no longer able to pay me as an LOA [Letter of Appointment], and I wasn't able to teach that year because of budget restraints. The following year, when the budget was put back in place, I taught 101, and Linda must have done a literature course.

So, I taught from the fall of 2000 through spring of 2006. Linda eventually turned over all online-course teaching to me and did the second year, too, because she just wanted to pursue other courses. Then she took a sabbatical year, and different things came into play, and I ended up teaching both levels up until 2005.

Bill and Joseba are like night and day. It was very hectic with Joseba, and there were some tense moments, but he *really*, really accomplished a number of substantial things. Getting that enhancement was huge. Then the quality of the international conferences that he put together, the level of scholars and speakers that he's brought to UNR and all the publications had an impact on the campus. Finally, people on campus knew that there was a Center for Basque Studies, and they also knew about Joseba Zulaika, because you can't miss him in a positive way. Basque Studies has changed a lot over the years.

I've kind of been in pivotal moments. In eight years I've had three bosses with three different managing styles and three different philosophies. So it's always exciting, that's for sure! [laughter] I've been very fortunate, because I have been able to be part of the program when Bill was still its director, and then I was part of the program when Joseba Zulaika took over, and all the new initiatives and new activities at the center that I undertook under Joseba.

It's becoming evident that it's more and more difficult to keep up the pace that Joseba started, and Gloria Totoricagüena

now has stepped back a bit. Now, with Linda's retirement, we're down a faculty member, and that obviously impacts course offerings, et cetera.

Also many things are being questioned with the changing of the guard at the Center for Basque Studies and the change of guard on the university campus. This campus is completely different than it was when Joseph "Joe" Crowley was around. Things that Dean Mead or Dean Herzik² approved of and were all gung-ho for, such as the whole online mission, are now being called into question. The university has a rule that if you don't teach a course every five years, you have to take it out of the catalog. If you take it out of the catalog, that means that if that professor, for example, wants to teach that course again, you have to start from zero, and you have to go through the whole Courses and Curriculum procedures again. So it's really kind of disappointing, because it's a lot of effort to get those courses approved, and now they're just going to be slashed.

Joseba had also thought that it would be a great opportunity for these scholars that had written the online courses to come to teach their course on campus every other year. When we proposed these courses, we said that they *would* be eventually taught on campus. If it doesn't fall within that five-year timeline, then you can't, because it wouldn't be in the catalog. And Gloria has to deal with that. It's just the reality of UNR today.

Then the number of publications that we've cranked out over the last few years is just mind-boggling, but it also has become clear that we can't maintain that pace. The activity is probably going to calm down for a while until we can get a grip and really evaluate what our mission should be, because we'll be forced by the new regulations at the university level. We need to fill Linda's position so we can fulfill the teaching that we need to do. So it's a time to see what's left, and what we can do with what's leftover.

Also, after 9-11, all of the paperwork and the bureaucracy involved with bringing people from the Basque Country is a whole new game. Even with our Begoña Aretxaga travel stipends, we've become a lot more limited in how we can pay people from abroad. We need to reevaluate all of the things that we took for granted, that we just always did, and that we were known for doing and all the facilitating we used to do to bring people from

the Basque Country to give a talk and to carry out research. It's just not that easy anymore, unfortunately.

I see the center evolving a little bit that way. We can't just keep up the status quo internally, because we don't have as many people as we should, but externally, too, because of the factors at the university level *and* the United States level. The Department of Homeland Security has kind of put a monkey wrench into our activity around here.

I've had extraordinary opportunities through my job at the Center for Basque Studies. Obviously, somehow somewhere, my experiences with USAC and my knowledge of Basque, Spanish, and French—because we do so much with scholars from the Basque Country—have been an asset for being in this position. Had I not gone on the USAC programs, I probably wouldn't have ended up in this job. Also having a rapport with Carmelo Urza, when I came to Reno, didn't hurt. So it's amazing! I can't believe it's been nine years that I've been working for the Center.

Notes

1. Robert "Bob" Blesse was the head of the Special Collections Department in the University of Nevada, Reno Gatchell Library from 1981 to 2006. He has been the director of the Black Rock Press at UNR since 1986.

2. Eric Herzik was the interim dean of the College of Arts and Science (and later the College of Liberal Arts) from 2003 to 2005.

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